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Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 70/201, provides an update on the implementation of processes derived from Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. In that context, it addresses: the outcome of the meeting of the 2016 high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council from 11 to 20 July 2016, with the theme "Ensuring that no one is left behind"; the implementation of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism; the strengthening of the science-policy interface and the Global Sustainable Development Report; the regional dimension of sustainable development; and sustainable consumption and production. Additionally, in accordance with resolution 70/201, the report addresses the mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development by the entities of the United Nations system and the their efforts to ensure that no country is left behind in the implementation of the resolution.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/201.

2. On 25 September 2015, the General Assembly adopted the outcome document of the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, entitled "Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".[1]

3. As recognized in resolution 70/201, the 2030 Agenda builds upon elements of "The future we want", the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development,[2] and provides, in conjunction with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda,[3] the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway,[4] the Istanbul Declaration and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020[5] and the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024,[6] among other related frameworks and agreements, a comprehensive and extensive implementation framework for the aspirations contained in that document. It represents a landmark in the mainstreaming, into the global development agenda, of the legacy of Agenda 21, the Programme for Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. The concepts and thematic areas covered in these instruments are directly or indirectly encompassed in the 2030 Agenda.

4. In the 2030 Agenda, and directly emanating from the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, as part of its determinations on the theme of the "institutional framework for sustainable development", the high-level political forum on sustainable development was mandated, under the auspices of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, with "the central role in overseeing follow-up and review at the global level".

5. Accordingly, the present report presents an update on: the meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council from 11 to 20 July 2016, the first since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda; the implementation of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism; the strengthening of the science-policy interface and the Global Sustainable Development Report; and the regional dimension of sustainable development. The report also refers to sustainable consumption and production and the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production.

6. Additionally, in accordance with resolution 70/201, the report refers to the mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development by the entities of the United Nations system and the efforts of the entire system to ensure that no country is left behind in the implementation of the resolution.

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[1] Resolution 70/1.
[2] Resolution 66/288, annex.
[3] Resolution 69/313, annex.
[4] Resolution 69/15, annex.
[5] A/CONF.219/7, chap. I and II.
[6] Resolution 69/137.

7. In the same resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to provide, in consultation with Member States and other relevant stakeholders, an updated report on the progress of the activities related to the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All, relevant activities within the United Nations system and the long-term institutional administrative and financial arrangements and accountability arrangements to Member States and other stakeholders of the Sustainable Energy for All initiative for submission to the Assembly at its seventy-first session. That report is forthcoming.

8. This report should be read in conjunction with other reports on sustainable development submitted to the General Assembly.

II. Follow-up and review

A. Meeting of the 2016 high-level political forum on sustainable development under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council

9. The high-level political forum on sustainable development held its first meeting since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda from 11 to 20 July 2016 under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council. The meeting included a three-day ministerial segment.

10. In preparation for the meeting, the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council and other intergovernmental bodies and forums were invited to share relevant input and their deliberations with regard to addressing the Sustainable Development Goals and targets from the perspective of "Ensuring that no one is left behind". Forty-seven submissions were received from the functional commissions and expert bodies of the Council, other intergovernmental bodies and multi-stakeholder platforms. A synthesis of these voluntary submissions has been prepared.[7] Fourteen submissions were received from major groups and other stakeholders on their contribution to implementation,[8] and an additional 100 were submitted, reporting on multi-stakeholder partnerships and voluntary commitments.

11. Twenty-two[9] countries volunteered to present voluntary national reviews at the high-level political forum, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 67/290 and 70/1. Executive summaries of these reviews are contained in a note by the Secretariat.[10] The Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs provided support for the preparation of these reviews, under the leadership and guidance of the President of the Economic and Social Council, with generous funding by the Governments of Germany and United Arab Emirates for workshops that allowed for the exchange of ideas, practices and information and enabled a collective reflection on the voluntary national reviews, their format and role in the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

[7] E/HLPF/2016/5.
[8] E/HLPF/2016/2.
[9] China, Colombia, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Madagascar, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Norway, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Sierra Leone, Switzerland, Togo, Turkey, Uganda and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).
[10] E/HLPF/206/7.

12. In addition to the submissions of Governments presenting voluntary national reviews, two additional submissions were voluntarily made by Governments.[11]

13. The theme of the high-level political forum, "Ensuring that no one is left behind", refers to the pledge made in paragraph 4 of the 2030 Agenda. Interactive sessions were held addressing different aspects of this theme: "envisioning an inclusive world in 2030", "lifting people out of poverty and addressing basic needs", "fostering economic growth, prosperity and sustainability", "food security and sustainable agriculture, climate action, sustainable oceans and terrestrial ecosystems — adopting a nexus approach", and "creating peaceful and more inclusive societies and empowering women and girls". During the ministerial segment, the theme of the forum was addressed, with a focus on "reaching the most vulnerable", "challenges of countries in special situations" and "unlocking means of implementation for the Sustainable Development Goals and creating an enabling environment".

14. During the session dedicated to assessing "where we stand at year one", the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs presented the report of the Secretary-General on "Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals".[12] The report presented the first overview of where the world stands at the outset of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, based on the set of global indicators developed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators and agreed upon, as a practical starting point, by the Statistical Commission in March 2016. The report summarized the regional and global status and trends for each Goal, using selected indicators for which data were available, and highlighted some specific population groups that are lagging behind as an input to the discussion on the theme of "Ensuring that no one is left behind".

15. Other discussions were held on issues relevant to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including: new ideas, insights and solutions on the science-policy interface; creating ownership in regard to the Sustainable Development Goals at the national level; mainstreaming the Goals into national policies, plans and strategies and integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development, economic, social and environmental; vertical cooperation between local authorities and Governments for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda; challenges in mobilizing means of implementation at the national level; national mechanisms for monitoring progress and reporting on implementation for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals; making the 2030 Agenda deliver for small island developing States, building on the SAMOA Pathway; countries in special situations; and multi-stakeholder engagement for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. An interactive dialogue on regional experiences was held with chairs of regional forums on sustainable development, the Executive Secretaries of the Regional Commissions and representatives of other regional organizations.

16. During the ministerial segment, the 22 voluntary national reviews were presented; a session was held on prospects for the future (projections, scenarios and new and emerging issues); and daily sessions of the general debate were held on the theme of the high-level political forum.

[11] Plurinational State of Bolivia and Qatar.
[12] E/2016/75.

17. The high-level political forum also included 109 side-events, a partnership exchange event for multi-stakeholder partnerships to share knowledge and expertise to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, a business forum on the Goals and a learning and practice programme related to the Goals.

18. The forum closed with the adoption of a ministerial declaration.[13]

19. The main messages of the forum are contained in the President's summary.

20. The following messages derived from the discussions on the theme of the conference, "Ensuring that no one is left behind", are of particular relevance to the role of the United Nations system in follow-up and review and in supporting countries in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda:

(a) Implementing the 2030 Agenda and ensuring that no one is left behind requires an urgent strategic shift whereby the instruments, policies and attitudes that create conditions of inequality and vulnerability must be changed, and obstacles faced by the poorest and most vulnerable countries and people must be identified and addressed;

(b) Inclusive, participatory and multi-stakeholder decision-making processes at all levels are key to safeguarding commitments and ensuring that no one is left behind. Vulnerable and underrepresented groups must be actively involved in decision-making as partners and rights-holders and as a source of knowledge. Education is a key factor in the ability to participate effectively and take ownership of development processes. All stakeholders, including Governments at all levels, the private sector, civil society, indigenous peoples and the scientific community, which have a role to play in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, should participate and contribute. To that end, sustained political leadership by Heads of State and Government is necessary;

(c) Challenges to lifting people out of poverty and ensuring that no one is left behind are interconnected and must be addressed as such under a human-rights based approach, including a gender perspective. Silo approaches will not work. Instead, implementation efforts will require integration across disciplines, ministries, the public and private sectors and local, national, regional and international levels, with the active involvement of scientists and experts, civil society and private citizens. Such efforts will require a focus on the interconnections between different issue areas and Goals. For example, a nexus approach to food security, sustainable agriculture, climate action, sustainable oceans and terrestrial ecosystems is critical as all of these issues are highly interdependent. Institutions will need to respond to the need for integration, coordination and coherence, the need to address interlinkages and to involve multiple stakeholders and the imperative of leaving no one behind. Some countries are already implementing institutional reforms or solutions in this direction;

(d) Decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation, ensuring sustainable consumption and production and respecting planetary boundaries are fundamental in order to ensure that no one is left behind;

(e) There is an urgent need for investment for the generation of disaggregated data to ensure the visibility of different groups in national statistics,

[13] E/2016/L.24-E/HLPF/2016/L.2.

thereby providing inputs for policy formulation and follow-up. There is a need for enhanced support for capacity-building in statistics at all levels by the United Nations system, including through the strengthening of national statistical institutes and offices. The active engagement of different groups, including indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities, is instrumental for the identification of indicators and data sources adapted to their specific challenges and realities;

(f) The Sustainable Development Goals cannot be achieved if significant progress is not made in the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and countries in conflict and post-conflict situations. Middle-income countries also face specific challenges, including widespread domestic disparities that are not reflected in the per capita income criteria;

(g) New and pressing challenges, some of which may be unforeseen, will present significant challenges to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to leaving no one behind. One example is the current refugee and migrant crisis. Swift international action is necessary to ensure effective response to these challenges in an integrated manner.

21. The first round of presentations of voluntary national reviews revealed that volunteering countries are deeply engaged in mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals and targets in their national strategies, plans and policies, including by: nationalizing and localizing the Goals and targets, putting in place consultation and coordination processes for the Goals and targets and setting up monitoring and evaluation systems at the national level, including revising or creating sets of indicators. While the reviews presented showed many similarities in terms of vision, goals and priorities, they also reflected differences in priority areas stemming from varying national contexts. All reviews mentioned means of implementation in general, and Goal 17 as a critical aspect of the implementation of the Agenda. Many reviews discussed the role of the private sector and of partnerships in the implementation process. At the global level, it will be important to reflect on what has been achieved through these reviews, where gaps remain, how this instrument can be of even greater benefit to the international community in the coming years and how the lessons learned through each country's own review and those of other countries may be applied at the national and subnational levels. Several volunteering countries acknowledged the support provided to them by the United Nations system for the preparation of their reviews, and the need for further support from the system to enhance data collection capacity was mentioned in many reviews.

22. With regard to the means of implementation, the debates stressed that:

(a) Achieving the 2030 Agenda requires a revitalized and enhanced global partnership: follow-up and review of commitments in terms of means of implementation must be an integral part of overall follow-up and review;

(b) An international economic environment that sustainably harnesses international private business and finance, development cooperation and trade, with special attention to the needs of those left furthest behind, will help overcome some of the challenges in mobilizing means of implementation;

(c) There is concern that certain existing agreements may hinder the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, reducing policy space. Limited capacity for

domestic resource mobilization in developing countries constrains the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals;

(d) International development cooperation has to respond to the transformative nature of the 2030 Agenda. Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitments must be met. ODA could become a better catalyst for partnerships between civil society and the public and private sectors;

(e) International cooperation should help address issues such as tax evasion, control and repatriation of illicit capital flows and tax base erosion, which deprive developing countries of much needed financial resources;

(f) The United Nations should continue to be a crucial platform for advocacy and operational capacities to mobilize partnerships;

(g) Science, technology and innovation have to be mobilized in support of the 2030 Agenda. It is important to reorient scientific and technological research towards inclusiveness and sustainable natural resource management. Science, technology and innovation can both enable and divide, and the development of national road maps in this area, as components of national sustainable development strategies, need to address this reality. Policies on science, technology and innovation need to be assessed based on economic, social and environmental impacts and outcomes;

(h) Government support for basic research will be critical in advancing science, technology and innovation, and support for the creation of markets will help ensure that innovative products and processes become commercially viable. ODA is important in order to catalyse Government support for science, technology and innovation. As a complement to North-South cooperation, South-South cooperation can also contribute by enabling the sharing of technology that is readily applicable in different developing country contexts;

(i) The newly established Technology Facilitation Mechanism, its annual multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals and its online platform have great potential to support national and local implementation of the Goals. Issues to be addressed in this context include the development of national policy road maps, methods of technology evaluation, the sharing and transfer of knowledge and multilateral resource mobilization for long-term investment in technology. A focus on capacity-building and the building of literacy in the field of science, technology and innovation is required for the creation of innovative knowledge societies.

23. During the ministerial segment, there was an oral report on the inaugural session of the annual Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up established by the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session.[14] The session, held from 18 to 20 April 2016, resulted in intergovernmentally agreed conclusions and recommendations on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.[15] The summary issued by the President of the Council provided a concise overview of the substantive discussions and highlighted the salient features of the forum,[16] including recognition that the Addis Ababa Action Agenda provides a

[14] Resolution 69/313, para. 132.
[15] E/FFDF/2016/3.
[16] A/71/88-E/2016/68.

global framework for financing sustainable development and is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, supports and complements it, and helps to contextualize its means of implementation targets with concrete policies and actions.[17]

24. Messages of particular relevance to the role of the United Nations system in follow-up and review processes regarding the regional dimension of sustainable development and countries in special situations are reported below.

B. Follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda: going forward

25. In the 2030 Agenda, the Secretary-General was requested to prepare, in consultation with Member States, a report for consideration at the seventieth session of the General Assembly, in preparation for the 2016 meeting of the high-level political forum, outlining critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level.

26. The report[18] reflects the analysis and proposals of the Secretary-General, drawing from the responses of 119 Member States to a questionnaire circulated by the Secretariat. Entities of the United Nations system and major groups and other stakeholders also provided inputs. Recognizing that primary responsibility for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda lies at the national level, the report explores alternatives for coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level. within the mandates defined by the Agenda. The report contains a number of recommendations, including recommendations on: how best to integrate relevant review processes and assessments by the United Nations system, non-United Nations organizations and national reviews; how to ensure that high-quality data supports the reviews; and how to ensure inclusiveness in global reviews, the ultimate goal of which is to accelerate progress towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. It also contains recommendations on the definition of themes and thematic reviews for the meetings of the high-level political forum held under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, on voluntary national reviews, how they could be featured at the high-level political forum and how they could be followed up on. The annex to the report contains a proposal for voluntary common reporting guidelines for voluntary national reviews at the high-level political forum.

27. Subsequent to the submission of the report, on 29 July 2016 the General Assembly adopted resolution 70/299 on follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global level. The resolution established, inter alia, that the sequence of themes for each four-year cycle of the high-level political forum on sustainable development shall reflect the integrated, indivisible and interlinked nature of the Sustainable Development Goals and the three dimensions of sustainable development, including cross-cutting issues and new and emerging issues, and shall serve as the framework for reviewing all 17 Goals. In the same resolution, the Assembly also determined the themes for the 2017, 2018 and 2019 meetings of the high-level political forum under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council and established sets of Sustainable Development Goals to be

[17] See ibid., para. 94.
[18] A/70/684.

reviewed in depth at those meetings, with Goal 17 to be reviewed annually, and also decided that the Council shall ensure the alignment of its annual main themes and the corresponding annual themes of the high-level political forum under the auspices of the Council.

C. Technology Facilitation Mechanism

28. In the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, Heads of State and Government decided to establish a Technology Facilitation Mechanism, based on multi-stakeholder collaboration between Member States, civil society, the private sector, the scientific community, United Nations entities and other stakeholders.[19] The Mechanism was launched by Heads of State and Government in the 2030 Agenda.[20]

29. The Technology Facilitation Mechanism has three components: (a) the United Nations inter-agency task team on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals; (b) the collaborative annual multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals; and (c) an online platform to serve as a gateway for information on existing science, technology and innovation initiatives, mechanisms and programmes within and beyond the United Nations system.[21]

30. The inter-agency task team was constituted at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in September 2015, and its terms of reference were adopted in October 2015. The task team is mandated to "promote coordination, coherence and cooperation within the United Nations system on science, technology and innovation-related matters, enhancing synergy and efficiency, in particular to enhance capacity-building initiatives", drawing on existing resources. It now counts 31 members from the United Nations system and its membership is growing. In January 2016, the Secretary-General appointed a group of 10 eminent representatives from civil society, the scientific community and the private sector to work with the task team to support the implementation of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism.[22]

31. The inter-agency task team and the 10 eminent representatives have collaborated closely on preparations to operationalize the Technology Facilitation Mechanism. In line with their mandate, they prepared the concept for the forum on science, technology and innovation, identified key resource persons, organized side events and supported the organization of innovative features of the forum, including a worldwide "call for innovations", as well as an "Exhibition hub", in which selected innovators were featured, and online discussions on science, technology and innovation whose content informed the discussions at the forum. The 10 representatives and the task team have also produced terms of reference for the independent technical assessment that was mandated as a first step to inform the work on the online platform that will constitute one of the core elements of the Mechanism.

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[19] Resolution 69/313, annex, para. 123.

[20] Resolution 70/1, para. 70.

[21] Up-to-date information on the Technology Facilitation Mechanism can be accessed at: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM.

[22] See https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/technology/facilitationmechanism/10membergroup.

32. On 6 and 7 June 2016, the President of the Economic and Social Council convened the first annual multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals. As a component of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism, the forum is mandated to discuss cooperation in science, technology and innovation around thematic areas for the implementation of the Goals, coordinating all relevant stakeholders to actively contribute in their area of expertise. The forum is tasked with identifying and examining technology needs and gaps in order to facilitate the development, transfer and dissemination of relevant technologies for the implementation of the 17 Goals.

33. The forum was well attended, with more than 600 participants representing 81 Governments and more than 350 scientists, innovators, technology specialists, entrepreneurs and civil society representatives. The forum presented innovative seating arrangements and interactive sessions that provided adequate time for discussion among all stakeholders. In line with its mandate, the forum experimented with ways to promote networking and matchmaking. Positive feedback from different groups of stakeholders was received during the official meeting and through social media.

34. Participants in the forum discussed activities and policies that support the development of technology, science and innovation that advances implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Emphasis was placed on how to make technological solutions and innovations more readily available to those who need them. Innovators, who were selected from more than 350 responses to an open call, presented transformative, scalable examples that already shape human interactions in a number of areas covered by the Sustainable Development Goals. Participants reflected on how information technology can support better sharing of information and matchmaking between technology supply and demand. In a ministerial dialogue, ministers contrasted their experiences in establishing national frameworks and strategies for science, technology and innovation. A session of the forum was devoted to the role of young people in science, technology and innovation and how they are using new approaches to innovate and develop solutions to meet the Sustainable Development Goals. In line with the mandate of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism, the summary submitted by the co-chairs of the forum informed the high-level political forum on sustainable development in the context of the follow-up review of the 2030 Agenda.[23]

35. The third component of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism is the online platform, which, in the terms of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, will "be used to establish a comprehensive mapping of, and serve as a gateway for, information on existing science, technology and innovation initiatives, mechanisms and programmes, within and beyond the United Nations. The online platform will facilitate access to information, knowledge and experience, as well as best practices and lessons learned, on science, technology and innovation facilitation initiatives and policies. The online platform will also facilitate the dissemination of relevant open access scientific publications generated worldwide".[24] As a first step, Member States mandated an independent technical assessment. The inter-agency task team and the 10 eminent representatives have prepared terms of reference for the

[23] The programme of the forum and further information can be found at: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum.

[24] See resolution 69/313, annex, para. 123.

assessment, and are in the process of identifying suitable candidates to carry it out.[25] An obstacle to the realization of the independent technical assessment since the launch of the Mechanism has been the lack of resources dedicated to it.

36. Through the inter-agency task team, United Nations organizations are strengthening their collaboration and coordination on science, technology and innovation. The task team has also conducted initial discussions on enhancing synergy and efficiency within the United Nations related to science, technology and innovation for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, including enhancing capacity-building initiatives. It is currently carrying out a mapping of initiatives related to science, technology and innovation within the United Nations system. It is envisioned that this mapping will be complemented by information on initiatives taking place outside the Organization, as well as by existing needs assessments, in order to develop a meaningful basis for identifying potential gaps and synergies.

37. The task team will continue to work closely with all interested Member States and the 10 eminent members, in order to realize the potential of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The forum will also provide an ideal opportunity for the task team to receive feedback from Member States and other key stakeholders in the fields of science, technology and innovation.

D. Strengthening the science-policy interface and Global Sustainable Development Report

38. In "The future we want", the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, it was determined that the high-level political forum would "strengthen the science-policy interface through review of documentation bringing together dispersed information and assessments, including in the form of a global sustainable development report, building on existing assessments".[26]

39. The 2016 high-level political forum featured two sessions dedicated to the science-policy interface. The discussions highlighted that, more than ever, science is needed to inform the implementation of the ambitious 2030 Agenda. While many problems posed by the 2030 Agenda cannot be solved by science, they will clearly benefit from the most complete picture that science can provide. In turn, science needs to be responsive to the questions that are put forward by the Agenda. Hence, it was suggested that the high-level political forum should remain a central platform for dialogue between science and policy. It should continue to seek the inputs of scientific communities worldwide, as they have proved that they are eager to contribute. It was suggested that a core area of focus for the science-policy interface at the political forum should be the interlinkages across the Sustainable Development Goals.

40. The identification of new and emerging issues is a critical function of the science-policy interface, and it is also one of the functions of the high-level political forum. Discussions at the 2016 political forum highlighted that a wide range of

[25] The terms of reference for the independent technical assessment can be consulted at: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/OnlinePlatform.

[26] Resolution 66/288, annex, para. 85 (k).

sources can usefully be drawn on when identifying emerging issues for its attention. The involvement of experts from multiple disciplines brings critical value added, including for prioritizing emerging issues and providing multidimensional analyses of the issues and their interconnectedness. Scanning system for emerging issues should pay special attention to those left behind.

41. In order to keep the conversation between scientists and policymakers alive, concrete suggestions were made, which included: maintaining open calls for science-policy briefs on a continuous basis; having annual updates on new and emerging issues at the high-level political forum; convening intersessional science meetings; and relying on voluntary efforts by the scientific community to produce science-based thematic reviews for the high-level political forum.

42. In the 2030 Agenda it was determined that the Global Sustainable Development Report would inform follow-up and review at the high-level political forum, and that it would "strengthen the science-policy interface and could provide a strong evidence-based instrument to support policymakers in promoting poverty eradication and sustainable development." In response to that mandate, in 2016 the Department of Economic and Social Affairs published a third prototype edition of the Global Sustainable Development Report, which was launched at the 2016 high-level political forum. The 2016 Global Sustainable Development Report focused on the theme of the 2016 political forum, "Ensuring that no one is left behind". As a critical dimension of the science-policy interface, the report also explores ways in which new and emerging issues identified by science could be screened and analysed for the benefit of the high-level political forum. A summary for policymakers was submitted to the political forum.[27] The preparation of the report involved an inclusive, multi-stakeholder process drawing upon scientific and technical expertise from within and outside the United Nations. Two hundred and forty-five scientists and experts contributed to the report. Sixty-two policy briefs were submitted in response to an open call. Twenty agencies, departments and programmes of the United Nations system contributed to the report.

43. In the 2030 Agenda, the President of the Economic and Social Council was mandated with the conduct of a process of consultations on the scope, methodology and frequency of the Global Sustainable Development Report, as well as its relation to the progress report on the Sustainable Development Goals. These consultations were held between March and April 2016. The agreement reached among Member States is reflected in the ministerial declaration of the high-level political forum. Member States decided that the Global Sustainable Development Report will be prepared once every four years for the meetings of the political forum under the auspices of the General Assembly. They have designed a three-tier mechanism for the preparation of the report composed of 15 eminent expert scientists to write the report, supported by a task team co-led by representatives of the United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the World Bank, which "will coordinate inputs from a network of existing networks, representing the United Nations, the private sector, civil society and academia".

[27] E/HLPF/2016/4.

44. Participants at the 2016 high-level political forum indicated that the 2019 Global Sustainable Development Report should involve more than a "snapshot" type of reporting on the levels of achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets. It should be relevant for policymakers, and address emerging issues as well as key bottlenecks to implementation from a scientific perspective and help inform policymakers in that matter. In operationalizing the mechanism put in place by Member States for the production of the report, it will be important to mobilize the broadest possible range of scientific inputs from multiple disciplines. Scientists reported that they see the process of mobilizing the scientific community around the Sustainable Development Goals as being as important as the Global Sustainable Development Report itself, and that the latter should be seen as a product of the former. Lessons learned in terms of seeking the involvement of scientists through multiple channels and providing institutional space for scientists, especially young scientists, could be useful for the preparation of the 2019 report.

E. Regional dimension of sustainable development

45. The outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development ("The future we want"), General Assembly resolution 67/290 on the format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda all acknowledge the importance of the regional dimension of sustainable development, including follow-up and review at the regional level, alongside national and global levels.

46. Since the holding of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, and in response to the mandate of the General Assembly calling on the regional commissions to contribute to the work of the high-level political forum, including through regional meetings,[28] States Members of the regional commissions have established regional forums for sustainable development: the third session of the Asia-Pacific Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, was held in Bangkok in April 2016; the third session of the Arab Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, was held in Amman in May 2016; the second session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, organized by the Economic Commission for Africa and other bodies, was held in Cairo in May 2016; the Economic Commission for Europe held its first Regional Forum on Sustainable Development in Geneva in May 2016, as a special informal segment of its Executive Committee meeting; and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean established the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development at its thirty-sixth regular session in Mexico City in May 2016.

47. Reports of the regional forums on sustainable development and regional preparatory meetings to the high-level political forum are contained in a note by the Secretariat.[29] Regional efforts and perspectives on supporting implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and on enhancing support for its

[28] See resolution 67/290.
[29] E/HLPF/2016/3, Adds. 1-5.

implementation are contained in the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields.[30]

48. In the session on "Regional experiences" held during the high-level political forum in 2016, it was stressed that regional organizations and initiatives provide important platforms for addressing regional priorities and challenges, mobilizing collective action and addressing transboundary issues. They are critical for ensuring coherence and integration of the 2030 Agenda with regional agendas and visions, for integrating the Sustainable Development Goals into national development plans and for strengthening the capacity of Governments to implement the Agenda. Building capacity with regard to data, in particular data disaggregation, is an area where regional organizations can, and are already, contributing. Such capacity-building is necessary in order to monitor the imperative of leaving no one behind. Regional forums on sustainable development will be a key part of the follow-up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, establishing a link between national and global processes.

F. Sustainable consumption and production and the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production

49. Sustainable consumption and production is a central aspect of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, "The future we want", and of the 2030 Agenda, as reflected, particularly, in Goal 12, but also in additional targets. The terms in which the 2030 Agenda addresses sustainable consumption and production, alongside other issues, make it coherent with the ideas underlying the concept of the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication as addressed in "The future we want".

50. At the 2016 meeting of the high-level political forum, sustainable consumption and production were addressed as a cross-cutting theme in several thematic sessions as well as in the voluntary national reviews. Participants referred, inter alia, to initiatives and policies on strategic cooperation on sustainability with the private sector; initiatives on increasing energy efficiency and renewable energy; sustainable tourism; sustainable agriculture; waste; analyses of the ecological footprint, domestic material consumption and resource productivity; revision of fuel price policies and investments in mass transportation; sustainable public procurement; and transparency and information for consumers. Sustainable consumption and production is among the top priorities in implementation strategies for the 2030 Agenda in some countries. It is considered central to "green growth" strategies in others and as critical in the efforts to address the effects of climate change. The interconnectedness between production and consumption patterns, including natural resource management, and sustainable development in different parts of the world was recognized, and some countries reported on initiatives to ensure sustainability throughout global supply chains. During the general debate of the high-level political forum, sustainable consumption and production was considered a central requirement in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Participants also referred to strategies on the green economy, green growth and related concepts.

[30] E/2016/15.

51. The ministerial declaration of the high-level political forum[31] emphasizes the commitment of signatories to ensure that consumption and production patterns and use of all natural resources are sustainable.

52. The 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production adopted at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development[32] is expressly referred to in targets 12.1 and 8.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals. The General Assembly, in its resolution 69/214, requested that the reporting of the board of the 10-year framework of programmes and its secretariat be made to the high-level political forum through the Economic and Social Council. The progress report on the 10-year framework submitted through the Council for the consideration of the political forum is contained in a note by the Secretary-General.[33]

III. Efforts by the United Nations system to ensure that no country is left behind

53. Critical to ensuring that no country is left behind are efforts to support countries in special situations

54. United Nations system entities have worked to support countries in special situations, including least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island development States through analytical work, intergovernmental support, advocacy and capacity-building through the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, UNCTAD, the regional commissions and numerous agencies and programmes providing support at the national, regional and global level. The entities of the United Nations system have also addressed the particular challenges of middle-income countries, which, while fairing relatively well in terms of per capita income, face particular challenges in terms of inequalities within their borders.

55. In regard to the least developed countries, pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 69/231 and 70/216, the Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 was convened in Antalya, Turkey, from 27 to 29 May 2016. At the meeting a political declaration was adopted[34] which addressed the state of progress and lessons learned in the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action and presented recommendations, reaffirming the global commitment to address the special needs of the least developed countries. The Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States has prepared a mainstreaming toolkit to support the ongoing efforts of the entities of the United Nations system to effectively mainstream the provisions of the Istanbul Programme of Action into their work programmes.

56. With regard to small island developing States, in its resolution 70/202 the General Assembly called for the full and effective implementation of the

[31] E/2016/L.24-E/HLPF/2016/L.2.
[32] A/CONF.216/5, annex.
[33] E/2016/62.
[34] Resolution 70/294.

commitments and partnerships announced at the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States and the fulfilment of the provisions on all means of implementation, as contained in the SAMOA Pathway. The Assembly also decided to establish the Small Island Developing States Partnership Framework to monitor and ensure the full implementation of pledges and commitments through partnerships for small island developing States in order to promote the effective and efficient follow-up to the existing partnerships and to encourage new, genuine and durable partnerships for the sustainable development of small island developing States. The Assembly also urged that effective linkages be made between the follow-up and review arrangements for the 2030 Agenda and those of all relevant United Nations conferences and processes, including the SAMOA Pathway, in line with the 2030 Agenda. The United Nations system has supported small island developing States in that regard, inter alia, through the efforts of the Small Island Developing States Unit of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. A report of the Secretary-General on follow-up to and implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS,[35] prepared in consultation with relevant bodies of the United Nations system, other intergovernmental organizations and Member States, outlines the progress made towards furthering the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway in accordance with resolution 70/202.

57. As regards landlocked developing countries, in accordance with the mandate of the General Assembly, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States continued to coordinate follow-up and monitoring of the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for the Decade 2014-2024. Efforts included awareness raising and advocacy for the special needs of landlocked developing countries; mobilization and coordination of the efforts of the United Nations system, international and regional organizations and other stakeholders with a view to providing technical assistance, capacity-building and international support to landlocked developing countries as part of the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action; supporting landlocked developing countries in effective mainstreaming of the Vienna Programme of Action into national and regional development strategies; and undertaking research and analysis.[36]

58. The 2016 high-level political forum addressed countries in special situations in two sessions. Messages emanating from forum of particular relevance to the continued support by the entities of the United Nations system to Member States in special situations to ensure that no country is left behind are as follows:

(a) The Sustainable Development Goals cannot be achieved if significant progress is not made in the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and countries in conflict and post-conflict situations. Many countries have had difficulties overcoming structural problems. The global environment has not been conducive to their development and global support has been limited. Going forward, it will be important to address the root causes of vulnerability and marginalization in those countries;

[35] A/71/267.

[36] For more information see A/70/305.

(b) Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals will be different for all countries and groups. National priorities should be the starting point. Synergies will have to be found between the 2030 Agenda and strategies and programmes of actions specific to groups of countries, such as the Istanbul Programme of Action, the Vienna Programme of Action, the SAMOA Pathway and Africa 2063. Several countries reported that, owing to limited resources, they have prioritized among the various Goals, while taking into account the need to ensure a balance between the three dimensions of sustainable development;

(c) Countries in special situations face difficulties in mobilizing human and financial resources. Beyond enhancing domestic resource mobilization, their success will largely depend on a strengthened global partnership, including capacity-building, technology transfer, technical and financial support, trade facilitation, and international cooperation to combat illicit financial flows. Commitments in terms of ODA need to be met. Mobilizing scientific know-how and expertise in these countries will be crucial, and international cooperation can play an important role;

(d) Regarding the small island developing States in particular, the SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda are well aligned and mutually supportive. Specific clusters of Goals, for example the nexus among food security, oceans and climate change, have special relevance for the small island developing States. It will be important to develop versions of the green economy and the blue economy that are appropriate to national circumstances. Climate change is a central concern and climate change mitigation by all countries will be critical for small island developing States. Climate finance should be made available to those countries, in particular under the Green Climate Fund. The high vulnerability of small island developing States to natural disasters should be taken into account when considering their graduation from the least developed country category. Financing and resource mobilization remain a challenge in small island developing States. Tax bases are generally low and the pool of investors limited. Attracting foreign direct investment remains a challenge;

(e) Data availability is severely limited in many countries in special situations, due to the limited capacity of national statistical offices, lack of basic data, lack of data systems at the national level and lack of access to technology and data infrastructure. Furthermore, commonly used indicators may not reflect the reality of countries in special situations, for example the highly dispersed population patterns in some small island developing States. The capacity of national statistical offices needs to be strengthened. Efforts should be made by these countries to develop primary data systems and to embrace the data revolution, including promoting citizen-led monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals;

(f) Middle-income countries are a diverse group facing particular challenges — notably high degrees of internal inequalities, which are not reflected in income criteria.

IV. Mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development by the United Nations system

59. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development called for the further mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development

throughout the United Nations system and requested the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, on progress made in that regard.

60. Building on the three previous reports (A/70/75-E/2015/55, A/69/79-E/2014/66 and A/68/79-E/2013/69), the fourth report (A/71/76-E/2016/55) addressed mainstreaming as a means to integrate activities and policies and more effectively assist Member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, along with other far reaching agreements, including the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

61. The report emphasized the importance of mainstreaming, with the objective of integrating activities and policies around the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, which are interlinked and indivisible and must be pursued as whole, and stressed the importance of intergovernmental guidance for the further integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, in particular the role of the high-level political forum and its thematic reviews of progress, including of cross-cutting issues.

62. The entities of the United Nations system have adopted a number of measures to enhance collective support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In this regard, in April 2016 the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination endorsed a set of common principles to guide the support of the United Nations system in the integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, the Board's High-level Committee on Programmes supported system-wide efforts to strengthen the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development into the work of the United Nations system by focusing on key initiatives for enhancing coordinated and integrated support to Member States on climate change, disaster risk reduction and sustainable urbanization.

63. The United Nations Development Group is developing tools, guidelines and methodologies and mobilizing resources to ensure coherent support at the national level, aligned with the requirements of the 2030 Agenda, across the development, humanitarian, human rights and peacebuilding agendas of the United Nations.

64. Throughout 2015, seven entities of the United Nations system completed the implementation of pilot projects to promote the implementation of a framework for advancing environmental and social sustainability throughout the United Nations system. The pilot projects were endorsed by the Environment Management Group, the United Nations inter-agency coordination mechanism on environmental issues, in 2012. Building on the outcome of the pilot projects, which showed that progress had been made by a significant number of United Nations agencies in introducing and integrating environmental sustainability in their operations and facilities management, steps are being taken within the context of the Environment Management Group to strengthen efforts in this regard.

65. The entities of the United Nations system are coordinating their work around selected areas: water, through UN-Water; sustainable cities and human settlements; and the development-humanitarian nexus.

66. Going forward, the report stresses the need for overcoming silos and seeking new and collaborative approaches to integration.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

67. A year into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, there is evidence of firm commitment at all levels and of engagement from multiple stakeholders for its implementation. The adoption and initial stages of implementation of the 2030 Agenda itself are major steps towards the ambitions expressed in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, setting the stage for inclusive, sustainable, development. However, there is equal evidence of multiple and significant challenges ahead. The role of the United Nations system will be critical to help countries overcome these challenges. The experience gained from the 2016 high-level political forum will be invaluable in the development of the agenda of subsequent sessions and in ensuring the effectiveness of the contribution of the political forum to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

68. In this context, the General Assembly may consider, at its seventy-first session:

(a) Inviting Member States and other stakeholders to continue to fully engage in support of the work of the high-level political forum in order to consolidate its central role in overseeing a network of follow-up and review processes at the global level;

(b) Inviting the President of the Economic and Social Council to consider, with support from the United Nations system, means of ensuring that national and regional preparatory processes to the high-level political forum, as well as relevant international processes, are adequately reflected at the meetings of the forum, so as to make full use of those processes for the benefit of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to enhance policy coordination and coherence;

(c) Inviting Member States and entities of the United Nations system to continue to ensure multi-stakeholder participation in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and in preparatory processes for the high-level political forum and voluntary national reviews;

(d) Inviting the President of the Economic and Social Council to reflect on the experience with the first 22 voluntary national reviews presented at the 2016 high-level political forum, and to consider calling on the Secretariat to prepare an analysis of the 22 reviews presented in 2016;

(e) Calling on the United Nations system to continue to support Member States that request assistance in the preparation of voluntary national reviews;

(f) Encouraging Member States that submitted voluntary national reviews in 2016 to share their experiences in support of the countries volunteering to submit reviews in future years, including in a regional setting;

(g) Encouraging the scientific community to contribute to the Global Sustainable Development Report and to submit voluntary science-based inputs focussing on the annual theme of the high-level political forum;

(h) Encouraging Member States to support the production of the Global Sustainable Development Report and, for this purpose, to consider establishing a dedicated trust fund;

(i) Requesting the Secretariat to prepare a short list of emerging issues relevant to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for consideration of the high-

level political forum at its meeting in 2017, based on consultation of scientific experts from a broad range of disciplines;

(j) Calling on the United Nations system to make further efforts to integrate the environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainable development;

(k) Calling on the United Nations system to support countries in the development of national statistical capacities and strengthening of national statistics offices and institutes to enable the generation and analysis of data, including disaggregated data, necessary to assess the pledge to "leave no one behind";

(l) Encouraging the United Nations system to help countries further develop their information systems in relation to marginalized groups, including through the inclusion of those groups in the collection of data reflecting their specific circumstances and needs;

(m) Inviting the high-level political forum to continue considering means of implementation in an integrated manner as part of the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda;

(n) Inviting all United Nations organizations, within their respective mandates, to consider the theme of the 2017 high-level political forum in their work in order to enhance coherence and ensure that full use is made of the potential of the United Nations system to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

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Promotion and protection of the rights of children: promotion and protection of the rights of children

Protecting children from bullying

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report of the Secretary-General, submitted in response to General Assembly resolution 69/158, addresses the prevalence of bullying and its impact on children's rights, reviews measures adopted by Member States and other stakeholders to prevent and respond to this phenomenon, identifies good practices and provides guidance on priority actions to ensure children's protection from bullying, including cyberbullying.

* A/71/150.

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I. Introduction

> "The teacher showed us a sheet of paper and said we could scribble on it, stamp on it, crumple it — but not tear it. Then she asked us to try and straighten it out again, but it was impossible to smooth out all the creases. Then she said this is what it's like when someone gets bullied".
>
> *11-year-old boy*[1]

A. Background

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 69/158, requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to its seventy-first session on protecting children from bullying. Recognizing that bullying can have a negative impact on the rights of children, the Assembly also requested that the report place an emphasis on its causes and effects and on good practices and guidance to prevent and respond to it.

2. The development of the report of the Secretary-General took on special relevance with the adoption, in September 2015, of the new global development agenda, "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".[2] Agenda 2030 addresses violence against children as a cross-cutting concern, and includes concrete commitments under a number of Goals and targets. In particular, under Goal 4, on inclusive and equitable quality education, it highlights the importance of knowledge and skills on human rights and the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, the provision of child, disability and gender-sensitive education facilities and safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all. Under Goal 16, on the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies, it includes a specific target to "end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children" (target 16.2).

3. Bullying affects a high percentage of children, compromising their health, emotional well-being and academic work, and is associated with long-lasting consequences continuing on into adulthood. Growing access to information and communication technologies (ICTs) places children at risk of online abuse, increasing their vulnerability to cyberbullying. Online or in person, bullying has a serious impact on both the victim and the perpetrator. Moreover, bullying comes at a high cost to society.

4. The United Nations Study on Violence against Children[3] recognized that bullying constitutes a concern of global relevance. To advance the implementation of the study's recommendations, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children issued a number of reports, including "Tackling Violence in Schools: Bridging the Gap between Standards and Practice",[4] "Releasing Children's Potential and Minimizing Risks: ICTs, the Internet and

[1] Ombudsman for Children, Norway, "I want to have good dreams: children's and young people's hearing on bullying and offences at school", October 2014 (http://barneombudet.no/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Good-dreams.pdf).

[2] Resolution 70/1.

[3] A/61/299.

[4] See http://srsg.violenceagainstchildren.org/page/847.

Violence against Children"[5] and "Toward a World Free from Violence: Global Survey on Violence against Children"[6] as well as a report on protecting children from cyberbullying as part of her annual report to the Human Rights Council.[7]

5. Concerned at the lasting consequences of bullying, parents, educators and policymakers are embracing efforts to prevent and address it. Data on the prevalence of this phenomenon is being compiled and disseminated at an accelerated rate, focused research is being advanced to address it and the attention of the world community is being drawn to the issue as a matter of priority as never before.

B. Methodology

6. The report of the Secretary-General was developed through the examination of submissions received from Member States,[8] independent national human rights institutions,[9] United Nations agencies and actors, civil society organizations and other relevant stakeholders.

7. The report also benefitted from expert discussions, consultations with children and a comprehensive literature review of studies and reports on bullying, including cyberbullying.

II. Nature and scope of the problem

"It ruins your life. Your life is stolen from you. It's loss of freedom, that's what bullying is".

19-year-old boy[1]

A. Bullying: a global phenomenon

8. The Convention on the Rights of the Child[10] recognizes children's right to protection from all forms of violence, including physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse.[11]

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[5] See http://srsg.violenceagainstchildren.org/page/1154.

[6] See http://srsg.violenceagainstchildren.org/page/920.

[7] See A//HRC/31/20, sect. III.B.

[8] Andorra, Argentina, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada (government of Ontario), Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Paraguay, the Philippines, Qatar, the Russian Federation, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden and Trinidad and Tobago.

[9] Australia, Belgium, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Republika Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Canada, Colombia, Denmark, Estonia, Georgia, Ireland, Latvia, Malta, Mauritius, Northern Ireland (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), Norway, Paraguay and Poland.

[10] Resolution 44/25, annex.

[11] See, in particular, articles 19, 28.2, 32 to 34, 37(a) and 39 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

9. Bullying can be defined as intentional and aggressive behaviour occurring repeatedly against a victim where there is a real or perceived power imbalance, and where the victim feels vulnerable and powerless to defend himself or herself. The unwanted behaviour is hurtful: it can be physical, including hitting, kicking and the destruction of property; verbal, such as teasing, insulting and threatening; or relational, through the spreading of rumours and exclusion from a group.[12]

10. Bullying usually occurs without provocation, and it constitutes a form of peer violence. Children who bully often act out of frustration, humiliation and anger, or to achieve social status, and their actions can inflict physical, psychological and social harm. Children who are bullied are likely to experience interpersonal difficulties, to be depressed, lonely or anxious, to have low self-esteem and to suffer academically, but all actors, including bystanders, and the school climate as a whole are affected detrimentally.[13]

11. Cyberbullying involves the posting or sending of electronic messages, including pictures or videos, aimed at harassing, threatening or targeting another person. A whole gamut of social platforms, including chat rooms, blogs and instant messaging, are used in cyberbullying.[14]

12. Often resulting from a face-to-face interaction at school, cyberbullying can cause profound harm as it can affect the child victim at any time, quickly reaching a wide audience. Moreover, technology perpetuates cyberbullying threats since messages may be posted and reposted over time. Bullying and cyberbullying easily feed into each other, forming a continuum of damaging behaviour.

13. Online or in person, bullying is among children's top concerns. Although rates differ from country to country,[15] it is present and widespread throughout the world, affecting a significant percentage of children as victims, perpetrators or bystanders.[16]

B. Data on bullying and cyberbullying

14. In its resolution 69/158, the General Assembly encouraged Member States "to generate statistical information disaggregated by sex, age and other relevant variables at the national level, and to provide information on disability, with regard to the problem of bullying, as a basis on which to elaborate effective public policies".

15. Data collection on the incidence, type and impact of bullying through household and school-based surveys began in the 1970s. The Global School-based Student Health Survey,[17] which has a module on bullying that covers children aged

[12] Olweus, D., *Bullying at school: What we know and what we can do (Understanding Children's Worlds)*, Wiley-Blackwell, 1993.

[13] See United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), "Stopping Violence in Schools: A Guide for teachers", Paris, 2011.

[14] A/HRC/31/20 paras. 59-66.

[15] See http://www.who.int/chp/gshs/en.

[16] See Roman, Marcela, and Murillo, F. Javier, "Latin America: school bullying and academic achievement", *CEPAL Review*, No. 104, August 2011.

[17] The Global School-based Student Health Survey is a collaborative surveillance project between the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, UNESCO, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to measure and assess behavioural risk and protective factors of children at 11, 13 and 17 years of age in 10 key domains (http://www.who.int/chp/gshs/en).

13 to 15 years of age, has been conducted in 85 countries since 2003. The Health Behaviour in School-aged Children Survey,[18] which was initiated in 1985, includes questions on bullying, covering children at 11, 13 and 15 years of age, and is now conducted in 45 countries. The Trends in Mathematics and Science Study, which poses questions to 10- and 15-year-old children about their experience of being bullied, has been carried out in 46 countries since 2011.

16. There is no international standard definition of what constitutes bullying or consolidated information on its severity and frequency. Existing surveys have addressed the subject with different age groups, covering different time periods and types of behaviour. These divergent approaches and measurements have made it difficult to estimate global prevalence or to generate precise, consistent and representative assessments. This is an area where more research would enable policymakers to develop evidence-based interventions and measure progress in prevention and response.

17. As noted in a 2014 report by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF),[19] consistent bullying patterns show that: boys are more likely than girls to bully others; girls are more likely to use psychological/relational forms of bullying; and boys are more likely to be the victims of bullying. A study using research and data collected from three national surveys[20] reports that the most common forms of bullying include: (a) verbal insults, name-calling and nicknames; (b) hitting, direct aggression and theft; and (c) threats, rumour-spreading and social exclusion or isolation. Some children are bullied because their gender expression does not conform to existing gender norms. Bullying of this type is not captured through disaggregation on the basis of sex.

18. Among all child victims of bullying, the youngest are more likely to be set upon, and they may be the most adversely affected. Although peer victimization appears to decrease as children grow up, the damage done by bullying in a child's earliest years may carry over, and children may perpetuate such behaviour as they grow older. Research indicates that retaliation is an element in a high proportion of aggressive behaviour, whether directly or indirectly.

19. In the Young Lives project on childhood poverty, which followed 12,000 children in Ethiopia, India, Peru and Viet Nam over 15 years, children were asked about their experience of bullying at 15 years of age, and outcomes were examined when they were 19 years of age. The study found that indirect and relational types of bullying, such as humiliation and social exclusion, were the most commonly reported, and while verbal bullying was also common, physical bullying was the least common. The study found that boys were at significantly greater risk of physical and verbal bullying, while girls experienced indirect and relational bullying at higher rates. Children from poor families and out-of-school children were consistently found to experience higher rates of bullying.

20. Children have increasing access to the Internet, starting at ever-younger ages. According to some studies one-third of users worldwide are below 18 years of age; children are online earlier and in greater numbers; and the average age of first-time Internet use is declining.[21]

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[18] The Health Behaviour in School-aged Children Survey research network is an international alliance of researchers coordinated by WHO that collaborates on cross-national surveys of school students.

[19] UNICEF, *Hidden in Plain Sight: A statistical analysis of violence against children* (2014).

[20] See http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/bullying-definitions-final-a.pdf.

[21] A/HRC/31/20, para. 62.

21. Online communication is now a part of children's daily life. Children shift effortlessly between the physical and virtual worlds and regard the distinction between the two as irrelevant.[22] As a result, they are increasingly exposed to the dangers of cyberbullying. In Europe, where over 80 per cent of children between 5 and 14 years of age use mobile telephones,[23] it is reported that between 2010 and 2014 cyberbullying increased from 8 to 12 per cent, especially among girls and children at younger ages.[24]

22. While there is still a significant digital divide worldwide, with Internet penetration in developing countries at around 32 per cent compared to a global average of 40 per cent, the number of Internet users in the developing world doubled between 2009 and 2014.[25]

23. In view of these developments, there is a need for the consolidation of statistical information on bullying and for enhanced international agreement on a robust and validated set of indicators and sound methodologies for data gathering to enable consistent and regular reporting.

24. The UNICEF Office of Research Innocenti is developing a global bullying database using recent data on bullying among 11- to 15-year-olds taken from six international surveys covering 145 countries.[26] The database will enable analysis of the prevalence of bullying by age and sex, and will show how reported rates are affected by the different definitions used in the surveys[27] in order to support the development of internationally agreed indicators of measurement.

25. Most current studies on bullying are carried out through school-based surveys, which are selective in terms of their target population, usually excluding schoolchildren with special needs, out-of-school children and children who are not in school for fear of being bullied, and the results are thus likely to underestimate the full extent of this behaviour.

26. In 2016, UNICEF, in cooperation with the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General, carried out an online opinion poll to gather the views of over 100,000 young people worldwide on their experience of bullying.[28] Participants provided information about how they experienced bullying, how it affected them and what prevention and response measures are needed. The resulting "U-Report" presents compelling data on the pervasiveness of bullying behaviour globally.

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[22] Ibid., para. 71.

[23] See International Telecommunication Union, *Use of Information and Communication Technology by the World's Children and Youth*, Geneva, 2008.

[24] Livingstone, S., Macheroni, G., Olafsson, K. and Haddon, L., "Children's online risks and opportunities: comparative findings from EU Kids Online and Net Children Go Mobile", London School of Economics and Political Science, 2014.

[25] See http://srsg.violenceagainstchildren.org/page/1154.

[26] WHO, Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children; WHO Global School-based Student Health Surveys; Trends in Mathematics and Science Study; Children's World Report (2015); Latin American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education, Second (2008) and Third (2015) Regional Comparative and Explanatory Studies.

[27] See Richardson, Dominic, and Hiu, Chii Fen, UNICEF, Office of Research, Innocenti Research Centre, "Developing a global indicator on bullying of school-aged children", April 2016.

[28] Children and adolescents in Burkina Faso, Chile, Guinea, Indonesia, Ireland, Liberia, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Mozambique, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Uganda and Ukraine participated in the survey.

Results of the "U-Report" on information flow regarding bullying

Of the over 100,000 children and adolescents surveyed:

1. Nine in 10 believed that bullying is a problem.

2. Two-thirds reported that they had been victims of bullying.

3. Opinions on why bullying happens were evenly split between four reasons: because adults do not see it; because kids are mean; because it's part of school; or for no discernible reason.

4. One-quarter reported that they had been bullied because of their physical appearance; one-quarter because of their gender or sexuality, almost one-quarter because of their ethnicity or national origin; and over one-quarter for unspecified reasons.

5. One-third thought that being bullied was normal and did not tell anyone; one-quarter did not know who to tell; over 4 in 10 did not tell anyone either because they were afraid or ashamed.

6. Over one-third of those who identified themselves as victims told a friend or sibling about it; one-third told no one; one-third told an adult; and less than 1 in 10 told a teacher.

7. Over 8 in 10 believed that their Governments should raise awareness in order to stop bullying in schools; and almost one-third believed that classroom discussions should be promoted.

C. Bullying is among children's top concerns

> "You don't always tell someone at school, because telling someone can also be a reason you get bullied".
>
> *17-year-old boy*[1]

27. Bullying is among children's top concerns. This is confirmed by the recent report issued by Child Helpline International on violence against children, which highlights that bullying is the most frequently cited reason why children contact a helpline,[29] as well as by the outcomes from the children's consultation promoted by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General with the Government of Uruguay and the Global Movement for Children, Latin America and the Caribbean section, during which children reflected on the root causes of bullying and on the urgency of prevention and response measures. As revealed in the testimony of the children themselves, bullying compromises a child's being, it is part of a painful continuum, and urgent action is needed to stop it.

28. Peer relationships are an important component of children's lives, providing them with a sense of well-being, confidence and self-esteem. Especially in adolescence, when they tend to rely heavily on peers for support and social acceptance, young people are likely to be self-conscious and vulnerable to a range

[29] See http://www.childhelplineinternational.org/media/149816/violence_against_children.pdf.

of insecurities. Being bullied is the antithesis of the affirming environment adolescents require as they transition into adulthood when a rupture of friendship and trust may amplify feelings of isolation, loneliness or helplessness, possibly setting off a negative trajectory of risky behaviour.

29. Episodes of bullying, which are carried out in plain sight in school environments, may not always be visible to teachers, who may not be able, willing or trained to read the signs of peer-to-peer bullying behaviour.

30. Harm can be prevented when children are provided with safe and welcoming spaces within the school environment and when adults model positive behaviour. Teachers can work with students to identify the places and times where children may feel unsafe, school staff can monitor unsupervised areas where children may be at risk, and adult supervision can ensure safety in school grounds used by children before school, between classes and after lessons.

31. Children who are victims of bullying are not always willing to report these incidents to parents, teachers or other adults either because of fear of reprisal or punishment against a known perpetrator, which may backfire on them, or, in the case of cyberbullying, because they are afraid of losing their computer, Internet or cell phone privileges.

D. Groups at heightened risk

32. All children are at risk of bullying, but those in vulnerable situations, who face stigmatization, discrimination or exclusion, are more likely to be bullied both in person and online. These include children who are: living with disabilities; from disadvantaged backgrounds; refugees, displaced or seeking asylum; indigenous or belong to ethnic, racial, linguistic, cultural or religious minorities; facing discrimination because their appearance does not meet cultural preferences; perceived as having a sexual orientation or gender identity different from what is seen as the norm; or unable to go to school or excluded from it.

33. Children who are socially and economically disadvantaged often face discrimination and denigration in school. Poor children who are victims of bullying, humiliation and abuse may feel powerless to speak out for fear that they will not be believed or that they will be blamed for having caused incidents of violence.[30] Children living in poverty are more likely to be suspended or expelled from school, and their parents may feel powerless or lack the necessary information to defend them from discriminatory actions by school officials or from bullying by other children.

34. Children with disabilities and special educational needs are at high risk of bullying. For them, social media offers opportunities as well as dangers, and many report that they may be actively discouraged from going online because caregivers fear that they may be bullied or because of concerns about Internet safety. Others may not be able to enjoy the benefits of ICTs because of physical barriers. Research reveals, however, that using the Internet can be empowering for these children because it allows them to connect with others with similar experiences, provides

[30] See ATD Fourth World, *Making Human Rights Work for People Living in Extreme Poverty: a handbook for implementing the United Nations Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights*, World Franciscan International, 2015.

them with support through social forums and helps them to build personal networks to help combat bullying or isolation.[31]

35. Bullying of asylum seeking, refugee and migrant children has much in common with bias incidents, harassment and hate crimes, which typically involve discrimination on the basis of race, colour, ethnicity, religion or other identity factors. "Immigrant bullying" has been defined as "bullying that targets another's immigrant status or family history of immigration in the form of taunts and slurs, derogatory references to the immigration process, physical aggression, social manipulation or exclusion because of immigration status".[32]

36. In schools, bullying often includes a gender dimension and is associated with gender-based violence, as part of unspoken, unconscious or hidden attitudes that promote gender stereotyping. Boys may taunt each other about their lack of masculinity or harass girls with verbal and physical gestures that are sexual in nature. Girls may use more covert yet equally damaging tactics, including gossip disseminated on social media, which makes the behaviour difficult for adults to see. Gender-based violence negatively affects both boys and girls.

37. Adolescent girls are often at risk of cyberbullying associated with sexual abuse. Threats include the sharing of messages or images of a sexual nature (sexting), or the promotion of online intimidation and harassment (cyberstalking), sometimes with a view to obtaining sexual favours from victims or coercing them into performing sexual acts (sexual extortion).

38. Homophobic bullying, including cyberbullying, is widespread, and in this regard schools can be particularly threatening social spaces. As noted in a recent report of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO),[33] lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students are more likely to experience such violence at school rather than at home or in the community, with psychological violence, including social exclusion and verbal bullying, the most commonly reported. Homophobic bullying often aggravates the sense of isolation of its victims. Entrenched beliefs that girls and boys must follow rules of conduct and/or appearance based on their biological sex contribute to this pattern of behaviour. Those who do not conform run a high risk of being exposed to bullying both in person and virtually. Homophobic bullying may take place at school, on the way to school and online, creating an inescapable continuum of threatening experiences that leaves victims feeling isolated, unsafe and worthless, while also putting them at risk of missing classes or of dropping out of school altogether.

39. In May 2016, at the International Ministerial Meeting on Education Sector Responses to Violence Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity/Expression organized by UNESCO in Paris, Governments adopted the "Call for Action: Inclusive and equitable education for all learners in an environment free from

[31] A/HRC/31/20, para. 78.

[32] Scherr, T. G. and Larson, J., "Bullying Dynamics Associated with Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration Status", in Jimerson, S.R., Swearer, S.M. and Espelage, D.L. (eds.), *Handbook of Bullying in Schools: An International Perspective*, New York, Routledge, Taylor and Francis, 2010.

[33] UNESCO "Out in the Open: Education sector responses to violence based on sexual orientation or gender identity/expression", Paris, 2016.

discrimination and violence",[34] the first document of its kind on homophobic and transphobic violence in education.

Call for Action

The Call for Action recognized that any form of discrimination and/or violence, including bullying, in educational settings is an obstacle to the enjoyment of the right to education and to equal access to educational opportunities of learners, and no country can achieve inclusive and equitable quality education or equal access to educational opportunities if any learners are discriminated against or experience violence because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.

Recalling cross-regional evidence indicating that learners who are perceived not to conform to gender norms or stereotypes report a higher prevalence of violence, with significant negative impacts on their education, health and well-being, Governments acknowledged the need for a comprehensive approach that promotes inclusion and diversity and prevents and addresses violence, and committed themselves to reinforcing efforts to that end, including efforts to prevent and address bullying based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression, taking into account the specificities of different legal and sociocultural contexts, and to ensuring cooperation between countries in sharing best practices. To address the problem, the Call for Action recommended strategic actions, including: (a) monitoring the prevalence of violence in educational settings; (b) establishing comprehensive national and school-level policies; (c) providing learners with age-appropriate, non-judgemental, human rights-based and accurate information on harmful gender stereotypes; (d) providing training for teachers and school staff; (e) ensuring safe, inclusive and supportive school environments; and (f) evaluating the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of responses to violence.

E. Impact of bullying

40. Research shows that children who are bullied are likely to experience problems with their health and their psychological well-being, including feelings of low self-esteem, anxiety, depression and helplessness.

41. There is increasing evidence showing that the psychological health of children who act as bullies is also affected: perpetrators are reported to be more likely to be involved in anti-social behaviour and to have an increased risk of depression later on in life.[35]

[34] https://en.unesco.org/themes/homophobic-and-transphobic-violence-education.

[35] Ttofi, Maria M., Farrington, David P., Losel, Friedrich and Loeber, Rolf, "Do the victims of school bullies tend to become depressed later in life? A systematic review and meta-analysis of longitudinal studies" *Journal of Aggression, Conflict and Peace Research*, vol. 3, No. 2, 2011 (http://njbullying.org/documents/Ttofi2011.pdf).

42. Studies also suggest that around half of all children involved in bullying are both victims and perpetrators, and that these children are particularly troubled and in need of urgent support.[36]

43. It is well documented that children's performance at school may suffer due to psychological distress or that they may play truant to avoid being bullied. School drop-out rates can also be higher among victims of bullying and cyberbullying. The impact of such behaviour depends on the character and circumstances of the victim, the particular type of bullying and the degree to which it violates a child's integrity and dignity, but victims commonly experience fear, distress, anger, insecurity, lowered self-esteem, a sense of shame and even suicidal thoughts.[37]

44. The situation of out-of-school children is particularly unfortunate because these children are not only deprived of their right to education they may also be stigmatized and shunned by teachers and others within the school community.

III. Measures to prevent and address bullying, including cyberbullying

> "The best thing I did was to tell someone — I wouldn't be here if I hadn't done that."
>
> *14-year-old girl*[1]

45. As highlighted in submissions received for the preparation of the report of the Secretary-General, significant measures have been undertaken at the national level to prevent and address bullying, in particular: initiatives to raise public awareness and mobilize support to prevent and address the phenomenon; efforts to inform and assist children; public policies and legislation to secure children's protection, including efforts to strengthen the capacity of schools in early detection and response; and restorative practices to repair harm, restore relationships and avoid recidivism.

A. Prevention, awareness-raising and children's empowerment initiatives

46. Anti-bullying initiatives include: information and awareness-raising campaigns to deepen understanding of what constitutes this kind of behaviour, its traumatic nature and its associated risks and consequences; the promotion of ethical communication that strengthens values, concern for others and children's sense of responsibility in preventing discrimination, promoting respect for human rights and fostering safety in school and online; and informing children about how to protect themselves, how to cope with the distress abuse can cause, how to enhance their resilience and how to avoid situations where their right to privacy, image, honour and reputation may be compromised. Both at school and online, children need guidance in developing their ability to make good decisions and in building and

[36] Veenstra, R., Lindenberg, S., Oldehinkel, A.J., De Winter, A.F., Verhulst, F.C., and Ormel, J. (2005), "Bullying and Victimization in Elementary Schools: A Comparison of Bullies, Victims, Bully/Victims, and Uninvolved Preadolescents", *Developmental Psychology*, vol. 41, No. 4, pp. 672-682.

[37] http://www.hbsc.org/publications/factsheets/Bullying-and-fighting-english.pdf.

strengthening positive values and life skills, including taking responsibility for their actions towards others.

47. In the 1990s, research pioneered by Dr. Dan Olweus informed the adoption of anti-bullying legislation in Norway and Sweden.[38] Subsequently, the Norwegian Government adopted a manifesto against bullying, calling for collaborative action across a wide range of stakeholders and recognizing the responsibility of adults and caregivers for ensuring children's inclusion in decision-making, obtaining the needed skills to prevent bullying and acting as good role models. In 2015, steps were taken to improve the knowledge of school staff about prevention, detection and response, to enhance support services and to provide guidance for children and parents, as well as to strengthen the capacity of the Ombudsman for Children.

48. Sponsored by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland, the KiVa anti-bullying programme is used in 90 per cent of comprehensive schools throughout the country. KiVa has three dimensions: prevention; the consideration of individual cases; and the monitoring of changes over time, including the provision of annual feedback for each school about implementation and outcomes.

49. The KiVa programme encourages investment in teachers and in the overall school climate, stressing the importance of listening to children and ensuring that they have a voice. It recommends: (a) addressing a bullying incident immediately within the classroom rather than lecturing students about it at length; (b) mandatory pre-service teacher training; and (c) training of all staff so that they are prepared to take steps to prevent and stop bullying within the school setting.[39] Evaluations of the KiVa programme have found that national rates of bullying and victimization have decreased since its introduction.

50. The Government of the United States of America, informed by significant research and surveys,[40] has created a comprehensive resource for prevention and response, including a dedicated site that provides information to children and parents on the nature of bullying, about who may be at risk, how it can be prevented and addressed, and how, when and where to report cases of cyberbullying.[41]

51. Worldwide, there are numerous initiatives to prevent and address bullying. The Indonesian Government, in cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders, has launched a social media campaign that includes initiatives led by young people to raise awareness, empower children and promote peer support.

52. In Ghana, where bullying has been identified as a key concern that compromises children's safety in school, guidance and counselling have been provided for teachers, a toolkit has been developed for families and communities and the participation of children has been promoted.

53. In the Philippines, the Anti-Bullying Act (2013) provides the framework for national awareness-raising and capacity-building initiatives, including parenting and family information sessions and orientation for professional groups and community leaders.

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[38] http://www.violencepreventionworks.org/public/olweus_history.page.

[39] http://www.kivaprogram.net.

[40] http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2015/2015056.pdf.

[41] http://www.stopbullying.gov.

54. In Mexico, the national anti-bullying campaign has focused on raising awareness at the local level, providing parents with support and guidance to identify and address changes in their children's behaviour associated with cyberbullying. In Argentina and Chile, efforts have focused on teacher training, workshops for students and parental guidance, as well as clinical care for victims and bullies to prevent recidivism. In the Czech Republic, a special centre provides information on online risks, including on cyberbullying, cyber-grooming, cyberstalking, sexting and the sharing of personal information through social networks and other potentially risky communications. In Lebanon, emphasis has been placed on training teachers in online safety and on the prevention and reporting of cyberbullying.

55. Anti-bullying health policies[42] and prevention programmes[43] are critical in addressing the psychosocial hazards posed by bullying. In the World Health Organization (WHO) *Global Status Report on Violence Prevention*,[44] countries reported on the widespread use of life-skills and social development programmes to help children manage anger issues, resolve conflicts in a non-violent way and develop social problem-solving skills.

56. The 2016 WHO global plan of action to strengthen the role of the health system within a national muitisectoral response to address interpersonal violence, in particular against women and girls and against children,[45] and the release of INSPIRE,[46] a package of evidence-based strategies for ending violence against children, provide critical tools to strengthen prevention and response efforts.

57. In 2013, UNICEF launched its #ENDviolence initiative to advance the prevention of violence against children worldwide, combining communication efforts with action by national partners. In countries such as Albania, Bulgaria, Malaysia, New Zealand, South Africa and Vanuatu, the initiative has drawn attention to the prevalence and impact of bullying, prompted action by Governments, civil society and the private sector and identified key areas for further action and research.

58. The "*Basta de Bullying: No te quedes callado*" campaign, sponsored since 2012 by the Cartoon Network Latin America[47] in cooperation with Plan International and World Vision, reaches 60 million households in the Latin American region, promoting awareness-raising and workshops to build the capacity of children, educators and parents to deal with bullying and to address the discrimination that often underlies violent behaviour. To date, 1.4 million students and adults have signed the campaign's anti-bullying pledge.

59. Facebook has teamed up with specialists from the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence on a bullying prevention hub for teens, parents and educators, which includes information on how to block and report online bullying, how to

[42] Srabstein, Jorge, C. and Leventhal, Bennett, L., "Prevention of bullying-related morbidity and mortality: a call for public health policies", *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, Geneva, 2010.

[43] WHO, "Preventing youth violence: an overview of the evidence", Geneva, 2015.

[44] WHO, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Global Status Report on Violence Prevention*, Geneva, 2014, table 5.

[45] World Health Assembly, resolution WHA69.5.

[46] http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/inspire/en/.

[47] http://bastadebullying.com and http://www.chegadebullying.com.br.

communicate if a posting is unwelcome and how to ask that it be taken down, as well as measures to manage privacy settings.

60. These promising programmes need to be fully evaluated, and children should be included in such efforts. Research shows that children themselves develop strategies to deal with negative cyberbullying experiences, including by blocking contacts, withholding personal details, finding advice online, changing privacy settings and making selective use of websites.[48]

B. Public policies to prevent and respond to bullying and cyberbullying

61. The Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocols thereto provide a robust legal framework to ensure children's protection from bullying and to address the challenges associated with online abuse.

62. Guided by article 19 of the Convention, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, in its general comment No. 13 (2011) on the right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence,[49] addressed psychological bullying and hazing by adults or other children, including through the use of ICTs.

63. The Committee noted that it is the obligation of the State to prevent and tackle violence against children, which requires the implementation of educational measures to address behavioural practices that condone such violence, including: strengthening children's life skills so that they can protect themselves from specific risks, including those related to ICTs; the provision of accessible and age-appropriate information on risks and self-protection; support in developing positive peer relationships; and their greater overall empowerment.

64. A number of Member States have developed policies to prevent and address bullying, with a special emphasis on the school environment. In Costa Rica[50] and the Dominican Republic,[51] the "*Convivencia Escolar*" programme helps to enhance respectful and friendly relations in schools through the engagement of students, teachers and school staff, parents and local authorities. This has led to improved early detection and response, including through dialogue, mediation and restorative approaches.

65. In Mexico, in 2014, the "*Convivencia sin violencia*"[52] campaign was introduced to bring attention to bullying in schools and to promote peaceful social interaction. The campaign included an anti-bullying initiative, *Proyecto a favor de la convivencia escolar*, through which the educational community, including parents, students and civil society actors, were given access to resources and recommendations on how to support and protect children both within and outside school.[53] The initiative advances the peaceful resolution of conflict, self-control and the development of coping abilities.

[48] See http://srsg.violenceagainstchildren.org/page/1154.
[49] CRC/C/GC/13.
[50] See http://www.mep.go.cr/sites/default/files/recursos/archivo/convivir.pdf.
[51] See http://www.educando.edu.do/files/5914/1200/1735/Normas_de_convivencia_16-0_-014.pdf.
[52] http://www.iniciativamexico.org/perfiles/convivencia_sin_violencia.
[53] http://www.sepyc.gob.mx/documentacion/Gu%C3%ADa%20para%20el%20docente%203%C2%B0.pdf.

66. In South Africa, the National School Safety Framework (2015) includes resources for the prevention of bullying and cyberbullying, homophobic bullying and gender-based violence. Implementation measures include training manuals and e-safety guidelines, the promotion of the national Anti-Bullying and Behaviour Change Campaign, the appointment of counsellors to provide psychosocial support and school patrollers to provide security in and around schools, as well as measures to ensure the early identification of bullying behaviour, the inclusion of restorative approaches and support for victims.

67. In France, bullying prevention has been a priority for the Ministry of National Education. Students are given training and support and are informed of available services, while the responsibilities of school administration are clearly identified. An Internet site[54] sets out national policies and programmes for the general public.

68. In Ontario, Canada, the Comprehensive Action Plan for Accepting Schools includes legislation and resources on bullying prevention and intervention, while the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy identifies discriminatory biases and systemic barriers to student achievement, promotes the participation of parents in their children's education and in the promotion of safe and inclusive schools and provides counselling and guidance on Internet safety.

69. In Ireland, the National Action Plan on Bullying (2013) promotes the development of school policies, including strategies to combat homophobic bullying. The plan was informed by consultations with children and young people, who placed an emphasis on prevention, including the need for: (a) all members of the school community to understand the various manifestations and consequences of bullying; (b) schools to tackle the underlying causes of bullying by promoting a culture of respect for the dignity of every person; and (c) children and young people to learn about and value diversity. The plan also called for: new national anti-bullying procedures for schools; support for training for school administrators and parents; the creation of a positive school culture to tackle bullying; the creation of a national anti-bullying website; support for awareness-raising campaigns; and research on the prevalence and impact of bullying linked to social media, on mental health and suicidal behaviour among young people and on effective support for children with special educational needs.

C. Legislation on children's protection from bullying and cyberbullying

70. Legislation is a key element of a comprehensive response to violence against children and an essential building block of a strong national child protection system. Laws convey a clear message to society condemning violence against children, set out guidance on how to ensure the protection of children, provide redress and means to fight impunity and provide the foundation for a culture of respect for children's rights, triggering a process of social change in attitudes and behaviours.

71. In addition, legislation needs to permeate the work of institutions and shape the training and ethical standards of professionals working with and for children, and to ensure the availability of accessible and child-sensitive, confidential and safe

[54] "*Agir contre le harcèlement à l'École*" (http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid86060/agir-contre-le-harcelement-a-l-ecole.html).

counselling, reporting and complaint mechanisms to address incidents of violence and provide needed support to child victims.

72. Several approaches have been pursued in developing national legislation. The adoption of specific anti-bullying legislation, particularly on cyberbullying, is a relatively recent phenomenon, which makes it difficult to draw firm conclusions about its impact and long-term effectiveness. Moreover, the absence of specific legislation does not necessarily indicate a legal vacuum, since States may address bullying using current provisions in their constitutional, criminal, civil and educational law. In criminal law, this encompasses provisions concerning harassment, assault, disclosure of personal information and incitement to hatred. Civil law provides remedies such as taking action for defamation or harassment, and redress may also be sought through national Ombudsman's institutions or data-protection agencies.

73. Some countries have established specific offences, including student harassment, disclosure of intimate photographs without consent and malicious impersonation online, to address distinct aspects of bullying and cyberbullying. New Zealand has adopted the Harmful Digital Communications Act (2015), which criminalizes the sending of messages and the posting of material online that deliberately cause serious emotional distress or incitement to suicide. The legislation is designed to deter and prevent harmful communications, reduce their impact on victims and establish new systems for quickly resolving complaints and removing damaging online material. It provides a broad range of court-ordered remedies, including: taking down material; publishing a correction or an apology; giving the complainant a right of reply; or releasing the identity of the source of an anonymous communication.

74. In other countries remedies have been established enabling victims of bullying to initiate civil proceedings or to seek protection orders, as well as measures prohibiting communication with a specified person, restricting the use of means of electronic communication or confiscating, temporarily or permanently, electronic devices used for cyberbullying.

75. Legislation may involve the establishment of a dedicated body to tackle cyberbullying, including the investigation of complaints, setting standards for online safety, liaising with Internet intermediaries and end users responsible for generating content to find a swift resolution to complaints or issuing formal requests to Internet intermediaries or end users to remove material. In Australia, the Enhancing Online Safety for Children Act (2015) established a Children's eSafety Commissioner to administer a complaints system for cyberbullying material, providing for the rapid removal from social media of damaging material targeted at a child while also promoting online safety for children.

76. In other cases, legislation has been focused on the school environment, in view of its critical potential to prevent and tackle this phenomenon.

77. In Mexico, the Law on the Protection of the Rights of Children and Adolescents (2014) requires authorities to: devise strategies for the early detection, prevention and elimination of bullying; develop training for public servants and school staff; and establish mechanisms that provide care, counselling and protection of children who are being threatened in school.

78. In Peru, a law passed in 2011 promotes a safe school environment and establishes mechanisms for the prevention, identification, response and elimination of bullying. Each school is required to appoint a psychologist responsible for prevention and for response to any incidents. Recognizing the importance of a collaborative effort between all stakeholders, the law establishes clear responsibilities for the Ministry of Education, school councils, headmasters and teachers, as well as for parents and caregivers.

79. In the Philippines, the Anti-Bullying Act (2013) requires that all elementary and secondary schools adopt policies to address incidents of bullying, establish relevant mechanisms and reporting requirements and outline sanctions for non-compliance.

80. In Sweden, the Education Act (2010) identifies measures that schools must take to prevent bullying and their responsibility to investigate and take appropriate measures against degrading treatment. It also requires that schools report and investigate all alleged incidents of bullying and have an annual plan to prevent and address it.

81. In Japan, the Promotion of Measures to Prevent Bullying Act (2013) requires schools to establish groups composed of teachers, staff and experts in psychology, child welfare and related fields to implement bullying prevention measures. Schools are also obliged to strengthen their capacity to counsel and consult with children and young people.

D. Restorative approaches to prevent and address bullying

82. Restorative practices have been used to address violence against children in different settings, including the juvenile justice system. They provide promising avenues to promote safe, inclusive and tolerant schools and to prevent and address bullying.[55]

83. At the heart of restorative practices is the goal of repairing harm and mending relationships rather than meting out punishment and retribution. In the school setting, restorative practices serve as an alternative to traditional disciplinary measures, such as suspension or expulsion, helping to reintegrate the perpetrator into the school community.

84. Restorative approaches are rooted in the values of fairness, acceptance of responsibility, transparency, the empowerment of victims, communal empathy, resilience and the involvement of the whole community.

85. In schools, restorative practices involve victim-offender mediation, group conferences and peacemaking or restorative circles, including the teaching of conflict resolution, the training of student mediators to solve conflicts among their peers and the setting up of associations of parents and teachers to play a supportive role in the mediation process.

86. Restorative approaches can give children a chance to tell their side of the story and be listened to, to find a way to resolve their negative feelings and to establish a

[55] Fronius, Trevor, Persson, Hannah, Guckenburg, Sarah, Hurley, Nancy and Petrosino, Anthony, "Restorative Justice in U.S. Schools", WestEd Justice & Prevention Research Center, February 2016.

sense of restitution for what they have suffered. For children who have bullied others, this approach can help them to understand and take responsibility for the harm caused, and to engage in solutions that can help provide redress to the victim and prevent recidivism.

87. Although research on the impact of restorative practices in schools is limited, available evidence suggests that they may have positive effects, including: improvement in school attendance and school climate and culture; greater community and parent engagement; decreased use of exclusionary discipline; increased student connectedness; and decreased levels of fighting and bullying.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

88. Bullying affects a high percentage of children, compromising their health, emotional well-being and academic work, and is associated with long-lasting consequences that continue on into adulthood.

89. Parents, schools and State institutions have a special responsibility for securing children's protection from the risks associated with bullying. Around the world there are ongoing efforts to prevent and address this behaviour. Importantly, data on the prevalence of bullying, including cyberbullying, is being compiled, focused research is being advanced and the subject is being given unprecedented attention by the international community.

90. Nevertheless, a wide empathy gap remains: many adults are blind to incidents of bullying, failing to understand the trauma it causes or still perceiving it as a rite of passage; and countless children are still frightened to speak out and suffer in isolation and hopelessness.

91. While bullying is among children's top concerns, it can be prevented when children are provided with safe and welcoming spaces and when adults support them and model positive behaviour. Significant measures have been taken at the national level to prevent and respond to bullying and cyberbullying, but much work remains to be done.

92. To prevent and address bullying and cyberbullying the following measures should be given special attention:

(a) Information, awareness-raising and social mobilization initiatives to deepen understanding of bullying, its traumatic nature and associated risks and consequences for children's enjoyment of their rights and for society as a whole and to provide guidance on coping, resilience and redress mechanisms and effective prevention and response interventions: these initiatives, which must be sustained over time and provide opportunities for practical feedback, should commit all stakeholders to promote a change in attitudes and norms that condone or perpetuate peer violence among children;

(b) Evidence-based initiatives to strengthen children's life skills and values, including respect for human rights, concern for others and responsibility to foster safety, and to inform children about ways of preventing violent behaviour in person or online, promoting mediation and peaceful resolution of conflicts, coping with distress and enhancing resilience: programmes that work with children, including

interventions that teach the basic skills of active listening, empathy and supportiveness, can help them cope with violence;

(c) Children's participation and contributions need to be at the heart of these efforts: they must be empowered and given the skills and confidence to stand up against bullying and seek help, to strengthen a positive peer culture and to become effective agents in prevention and response, supporting a safe learning environment for all; guided by ethical standards, they should be involved in the development of initiatives to prevent and address bullying and their potential to support the creation of violence-free schools should be maximized, including through the establishment of appropriate structures to facilitate their participation in decision-making;

(d) Children must be informed of available support services, including safe, accessible, age and child-sensitive, confidential and independent counselling and reporting mechanisms, as well as of procedures in place to support them in this process;

(e) While explicit protections from bullying and an inclusive and safe learning environment are required for all children, children in vulnerable situations must be prioritized in efforts to promote the values of human rights, mutual respect and tolerance for diversity and to overcome stigmatization, discrimination or exclusion in person and online;

(f) Parents and caregivers should be supported in developing non-violent discipline skills and provided with information and advice on how to identify the warning signs of bullying so that they can understand and act upon risks and support their children in preventing and addressing incidents by promoting empathy in the home as well as a positive school climate, modelling respectful and compassionate communication and avoiding aggressive, intimidating and abusive behaviour;

(g) Whole-school and whole-community programmes should be promoted to prevent and combat bullying and to safeguard children's physical and emotional safety and their academic achievement: promoting a child-centred and multidisciplinary approach, engaging students, teachers, school staff, parents and local authorities, is critical in ensuring social inclusion, safety and mutual respect in the school environment, as well as early detection and prompt action to address violent behaviour: with strong leadership and sustained investment, including adequate resources for effective implementation, a whole-school approach promotes policies and codes of conduct imbued with the human rights values of tolerance and respect for diversity and their integration into the school curricula and culture and strengthens a shared commitment to uphold them, monitor progress in their implementation and swiftly follow up on reported cases of bullying;

(h) Teachers can play a crucial role in preventing bullying by raising awareness of children's rights, organizing regular classroom discussions, supporting school mediation, promoting parents' involvement and strengthening children's participation in establishing principles and practices on prevention and response: teachers need specialized training to facilitate discussions about bullying because children may be afraid to share information with adults, and capacity-building initiatives should involve all school staff in advancing a clear understanding of which behaviours constitute bullying and warrant a response and should provide skills to investigate and resolve such incidents;

(i) Clear and comprehensive legislation on children's protection from bullying provides an invaluable tool in prevention and response: national legislation is critical in order to specify prohibited conduct; safeguard the rights of affected children; establish safe and child-sensitive counselling and reporting procedures; inform victims of avenues of redress; provide guidance on the investigation and recording of incidents; and provide advice and training to prevent, identify and respond to bullying: legislation is equally important in the establishment of specific protection measures for groups at special risk and of restorative approaches, and, in adopting legislation, care must be taken to avoid the imposition of measures that could worsen children's sense of alienation or resentment or place them at further risk of victimization or criminalization;

(j) Breaking the silence and promoting a positive change in attitudes about bullying requires the collection and wide dissemination of accurate, reliable and disaggregated data on its scale and nature: internationally agreed definitions of what constitutes bullying behaviour and the development of standardized and validated indicators, along with sound research methodologies, will be needed to support this work; data gathered using agreed protocols will help ensure that bullying estimates are internationally comparable and will support the design of evidence-based prevention programmes as well the measurement of progress in their implementation;

(k) Further research is needed on the dimensions of bullying that have been neglected, including young children's experiences, the nature and impact of bullying on children in the global South and its impact over the life cycle.

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Realization of internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities and progress made in the implementation of the outcome document of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/142, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General, in coordination with all relevant United Nations entities, to submit to it at its seventy-first session information on the implementation of the resolution and of the outcome document of the high-level meeting of the Assembly on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities.

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The present report reviews the extent to which recently adopted international development frameworks, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda) (General Assembly resolution 69/313, annex) and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (Assembly resolution 69/283, annex II), address and include the rights, well-being and perspectives of persons with disabilities. It also presents recent initiatives to include disability in development processes, based on the information contributed by Governments, the United Nations system, civil society organizations and, in particular, organizations of persons with disabilities, as well as other information available to the Secretariat. The report presents many positive initiatives in this regard, while noting that the international community is still at the beginning of action towards achieving internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities. In the case of the Sustainable Development Goals, accelerated progress for persons with disabilities would require ensuring the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of development processes by ensuring accessibility, securing sound data and evidence and addressing inequality by implementing an integrated approach to policymaking for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in society and development. The report concludes with recommendations for the next steps for strengthening efforts in these areas.

I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 69/142, expressed concern that persons with disabilities continued to be largely invisible in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals. The Assembly noted that, while progress had been made in mainstreaming disability as an integral part of the development agenda, major challenges remained. It also reaffirmed the outcome document of the high-level meeting of the Assembly on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities and recognized the continued need to give consideration to the issue of the rights of persons with disabilities in the formulation of the post-2015 development agenda. The Assembly also encouraged Member States, the United Nations system and other stakeholders to further improve coordination to advance a disability-inclusive global agenda. The Assembly also urged Member States, United Nations agencies, international and regional organizations and other members of the international community to make a concerted effort to integrate the principles of accessibility and inclusion into the monitoring and evaluation of the development goals.

2. In the same resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, in coordination with all relevant United Nations entities, to submit to it at its seventy-first session information on the implementation of the resolution and of the outcome document of the high-level meeting of the Assembly on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities. The present report: (a) provides an overview of ongoing efforts to mainstream the rights, well-being and perspectives of persons with disabilities in development; (b) reviews the extent to which recently adopted international development frameworks have addressed and included the rights, well-being and perspectives of persons with disabilities; (c) summarizes the ongoing efforts by Member States and the United Nations system in this regard, including recent examples of disability-responsive development policies and programmes; and (d) describes the progress made in the work of civil society organizations to better respond to the rights and perspectives of persons with disabilities. In conclusion, the report addresses persistent gaps between policy and practice and provides recommendations to support the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, which are centred on the Sustainable Development Goals, for persons with disabilities.

II. Current status of disability inclusion in international development frameworks

3. Disability has been increasingly recognized as a cross-cutting development issue in global agendas. Contrary to the Millennium Development Goals (General Assembly resolution 55/2), which do not include references to persons with disabilities, recent international development frameworks incorporate the rights and perspectives of persons with disabilities. This represents a major breakthrough and demonstrates the strong political commitment of the international community to disability-inclusive development, following the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities. The

high-level meeting called on the international community to seize every opportunity to include disability as a cross-cutting issue in the global development agenda and to give due consideration to disability in the then emerging 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Assembly resolution 68/3).

4. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1) is a plan of action for the people, the planet and prosperity that recognizes that eradicating poverty, in all its forms and dimensions, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. The Sustainable Development Goals explicitly include issues concerning persons with disabilities in seven of their targets. These targets address access to education and employment, availability of schools sensitive and responsive to students with disabilities, inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities, accessible transport, accessible public and green spaces and building capacity of countries to disaggregate data by disability. Moreover, the Agenda establishes a commitment to providing persons with disabilities with access to lifelong learning opportunities that will help them to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to exploit opportunities and to participate fully in society. The Agenda also establishes that the follow-up and review processes at the national, regional and global levels should be guided by data that are disaggregated by disability.

5. The global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals was agreed on by the Statistical Commission at its forty-seventh session (E/2016/24). The framework includes 11 indicators that refer explicitly to disability. These indicators focus on social protection coverage for persons with disabilities, disparities in education between persons with and without disabilities, schools with adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities, earnings by employed persons with disabilities, persons with disabilities living below 50 per cent of median income, access to convenient public transport by persons with disabilities, public open spaces for use by persons with disabilities, victims with disabilities of physical and sexual harassment, positions in public institutions occupied by persons with disabilities and assessments by persons with disabilities on whether decision-making is inclusive.

6. In the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda) (General Assembly resolution 69/313, annex), Member States also committed themselves to: providing social protection to persons with disabilities; encouraging the full participation of persons with disabilities in the labour market; delivering quality education to all by reaching children with disabilities; upgrading education facilities that are disability-sensitive; facilitating accessible technology for persons with disabilities; and using data disaggregated by disability. The Action Agenda also urges developed countries to step up efforts to increase their official development assistance (ODA) and to make additional concrete efforts towards achieving the ODA targets. ODA, if properly directed, can drive inclusive development and better facilitate access for persons with disabilities to education, employment, social protection and information and communications technology. The Action Agenda also encourages Member States and the business sector to work in partnership with regional and national organizations. If disability organizations are included, the needs of persons with disabilities can be better addressed in financing for development.

7. The Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Sendai, Japan, in March 2015, adopted the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (Assembly resolution 69/283, annex II), which recognizes persons with disabilities as a group whose active participation, involvement and contribution of expertise in disaster preparedness optimize resilience and survival of persons with disabilities. The Framework also sets out principles of universal design and accessibility in all aspects of disaster risk mitigation and preparedness and calls for universally accessible responses.

8. A disability caucus comprised of a group of Member States, United Nations entities and organizations of persons with disabilities was established to support and guide the integration of a disability perspective in the planning and preparatory processes leading to the Sendai Conference. The impact of the caucus in strengthening understanding of disability-inclusive strategies is observed in the repeated references to disability in the Sendai Framework, which mark a significant improvement on the preceding global framework guiding disaster risk reduction.[1] The Sendai Framework represents a milestone not only for advancing disability inclusion in the framework for disaster risk reduction, but for also gaining explicit recognition of the role of persons with disabilities as agents of change, whose active engagement in disaster planning and responses directly benefit not only themselves, but also other groups, and ultimately saves lives.

9. The Sendai Conference also enabled the active participation of persons with disabilities through the provision of a range of accessibility features. Over 200 persons with disabilities attended and contributed to the Conference in various capacities. This signifies a substantial improvement for disability inclusion and should set a precedent for future global conferences.

10. The first World Humanitarian Summit, which was held in Istanbul, Turkey, in May 2016, increased further the visibility of persons with disabilities in situations of crisis and emphasized the need to find durable and inclusive solutions. The special session of the Summit on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action and the multi-stakeholder endorsement of the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action underscore the international commitment to integrate the rights and perspectives of persons with disabilities in all aspects and stages of humanitarian responses. Multi-stakeholders at the Summit also called for strengthened cooperation and coordination among humanitarian and development actors to improve the inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian responses, risk-informed development practices and in transitions towards recovery and reconstruction. As noted in the Chair's summary, commitments made at the Summit to the Charter and its implementation will play a critical role in achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as the Sendai Framework and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda for persons with disabilities.

11. As the global community prepares for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development (Habitat III), to be held in Quito from 17 to 20 October 2016, and the adoption of the New Urban Agenda, to guide global urban development for the next two decades, it is encouraging to note that the preparatory processes are taking into account the urgent need for urban policy, regulatory norms and standards to be informed by principles of universal design and accessibility for

[1] See Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters (A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, chap. I, resolution 2).

all.[2] The achievement of truly inclusive development in urban spaces, where no one is left behind, requires a holistic approach, with people at its centre.

12. The multi-stakeholder Forum on Disability Inclusion and Accessible Urban Development was organized jointly by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the Division for Social Policy and Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in Nairobi in October 2015, in conjunction with World Cities Day, to review opportunities to advance sustainable and inclusive urban development. The Forum was held as a contribution to the processes leading to Habitat III. As underscored in the Forum outcome, accessibility is a collective good that benefits all. The Forum also recommended that future frameworks that guide urban development should consider accessibility as a key component of good policy and facilitate the full and effective participation of all in pursuit of inclusive and sustainable development in alignment with Sustainable Development Goal 11. It is imperative that the New Urban Agenda builds on recent successes of embedding the rights and perspectives of persons with disabilities in international development frameworks.

13. This recent progress indicates that the rights and perspectives of persons with disabilities are increasingly becoming an integral part of international development frameworks. As called for in the high-level meeting, recognition of persons with disabilities as both beneficiaries and agents of change, and their active participation in all stages of policy formulation and implementation are now clearly reflected in mainstream development processes. Section III of the present report includes examples of measures taken and progress achieved in the follow-up to the implementation of the outcome of the high-level meeting.

III. Measures taken and progress achieved in the follow-up to the implementation of the outcome of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities

14. The high-level meeting was instrumental in guiding inclusive development efforts and securing commitment to mainstreaming disability. As part of the follow-up, a multi-stakeholder panel discussion was organized in June 2016 by the President of the General Assembly to review progress made towards the realization of development goals for persons with disabilities. The panel reviewed existing institutional frameworks to mainstream a rights-based approach to disability in development efforts at the international, national and local levels and assessed current progress towards the operationalization of the 2030 Agenda for persons with disabilities.

15. The panel underlined the importance of institutionalizing the inclusion of the rights, perspectives and well-being of persons with disabilities in policy development at all levels and emphasized this process should involve active and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities. The role of data and, in particular, disability-disaggregated data in measuring progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and informing decision-making and programme

[2] See https://www.habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda.

formulation was also discussed; it was noted that responsive and effective policies depended on the existence of reliable data on all groups, including persons with disabilities. The panel reiterated the role of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as a guiding tool for international cooperation and national efforts to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

16. In response to a note verbale dated 6 April 2016 from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, 12 Member States,[3] 9 entities of the United Nations system[4] and 5 civil society organizations[5] provided information on progress made towards the realization of internationally agreed development goals. The responses also provided specific recommendations for action to be taken to implement a disability-inclusive 2030 Agenda.

A. Member States

17. The present subsection highlights examples of recent efforts to mainstream disability in development processes reported by Member States in response to the above-mentioned note verbale.

National action plans and programmes

18. National action plans to promote equal opportunities for persons with disabilities have continued to be key instruments used to guide and strengthen inclusive society and development. Australia, for instance, has continued to implement its National Disability Strategy 2010-2020, to ensure a more inclusive approach to the design of policies, programmes and infrastructure. Georgia has reported joint planning with non-governmental organizations and organizations of persons with disabilities for a national action plan; and Swaziland is finalizing a national disability plan of action.

Accessibility

19. Accessibility, including improving access to services, facilities and the built environment, is a key priority of many Member States. Poland has reported efforts to improve accessibility through the promotion of universal design in built environments and information technology and has issued a new digital agenda ensuring equal opportunities for persons with disabilities. Georgia has adopted an ordinance on adaption of space and design for persons with disabilities. Universal access to all public health interventions is being promoted in Swaziland, while China has conducted extensive construction and renovation to improve accessibility in 1,618 cities, towns and districts, benefiting 147,000 low-income households of

[3] Argentina, Australia, Bulgaria, Chile, China, Denmark, Georgia, Panama, Peru, Poland, Sierra Leone and Swaziland.

[4] The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the United Nations Mine Action Service, the United Nations Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Intellectual Property Organization.

[5] Disabled People's International, the International Disability Alliance, the International Disability and Development Consortium, the Nippon Foundation and the Zero Project.

persons with disabilities. Chile has issued a decree regulating standards for the built environment, which incorporates principles of universal design and establishes deadlines for accessibility modifications to existing buildings. Peru has strengthened accessibility to voting through the use of accessible polling documentation and by improving accessibility at voting stations.

Employment

20. Significant efforts continue to be made to strengthen training and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. In Australia, the National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 provides for improvements in learning and skills, and well as economic security. China has reported on activities to promote the employment of persons with disabilities in the public service through self-employment programmes. Programmes for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the labour market through training, technical assistance and self-employment have also been implemented in Argentina. Peru has reported increases in the number of persons with disabilities who had received technical training and entered the labour market.

Inclusive approaches to disaster risk reduction and humanitarian responses

21. Inclusive disaster risk reduction and humanitarian responses have been strengthened by a number of Member States. Chile has established a disability-responsive national platform for disaster risk reduction, and Panama has incorporated disability in disaster risk management awareness campaigns and protocols. Sierra Leone reported increased efforts to strengthen the resilience of disabled persons during humanitarian crises, through the provision of welfare services and awareness-raising. Australia reported on advocacy efforts in the organization of the special session on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action at the World Humanitarian Summit.

Social protection and social services

22. Strategies to guarantee social protection and improve social services for persons with disabilities have been reported by a number of countries. Support for personal and care services to persons with disabilities are being provided in Denmark to its 98 municipalities and 5 regions. Bulgaria reported the provision of free social services for children with disabilities. Bulgaria, Denmark and Georgia have strengthened their social services for persons with permanent mental or physical disabilities. Bulgaria also reported on the positive impact of social services on improving the quality of life and preventing institutionalization of persons with disabilities. Georgia also reported on efforts to improve psychosocial conditions and integration into society of persons with disabilities through the provision of a range of residential, community and family-tailored social services.

Monitoring mechanisms

23. National mechanisms to monitor and strengthen the impact of policies and programmes on the lives of persons with disabilities have been receiving greater attention in a number of countries. Denmark, for instance, reported on the creation of a number of measures, including the election of an ombudsman and the designation of an independent institute for human rights to monitor the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In

Sierra Leone, a special needs working group has been created within the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology to identify challenges to inclusive education. Bulgaria has established as an advisory board a national council for the integration of persons with disabilities. In Chile, a secretariat for disabilities has been created within the Ministry of Social Development.

Data and statistics

24. Efforts to strengthen national knowledge bases in the area of disability data and to collect data disaggregated by disability have been reported by a number of Member States. Denmark is employing a new strategy to collect and analyse data on target groups and to evaluate support services. Australia continues to implement its Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers. In Panama, the national system for statistics on disabled people has provided a platform for integrated information on groups of persons with disabilities to facilitate policy evaluation.

B. United Nations system

25. Collaboration and coordination within the United Nations system to advance the rights and perspectives of persons with disabilities continue to grow and be strengthened through existing mechanisms, particularly the Inter-Agency Support Group on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities[6] and the United Nations Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.[7] With the recent adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, coordination among United Nations entities to support Member States in the operationalization of the 2030 Agenda for persons with disabilities is already taking place.

26. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the focal point on disability for the United Nations system, is leading in supporting the operationalization of the 2030 Agenda for persons with disabilities and has conducted a number of activities to advance disability-inclusive implementation. The Department, on behalf of the Inter-Agency Support Group, has contributed to the work of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators with technical advice on indicators to measure progress and inform policymaking for persons with disabilities under the Sustainable Development Goals and has continued to support intergovernmental processes to review and discuss mechanisms to monitor progress in the achievement of the Goals for persons with disabilities. The Department has prompted multi-stakeholder dialogues by hosting consultations, forums and expert meetings and has produced a publication on the status of disability in development. In the processes leading to Habitat III, the Department, together with UN-Habitat, is strengthening recognition of the importance of accessible and disability-inclusive urbanization through the organization of multi-stakeholder forums, consultations and public outreach.

[6] The Inter-Agency Support Group has expanded its membership over the past two years to include the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. It has also established a number of sub-working groups to support implementation of articles 6 and 11 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

[7] The United Nations Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has expanded its membership and revised its Strategic and Operational Framework to build on the experiences of its first phase of implementation.

27. Significant action has also been taken by United Nations entities to advance disability inclusion in crisis situations. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, together with the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and a multi-stakeholder caucus, has contributed to greater understanding of challenges faced by persons with disabilities in all aspects of disaster risk reduction and response policies, programmes and processes in the lead-up to the Sendai Conference. In 2015, the Inter-Agency Support Group on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has established a sub-working group to strengthen the rights and perspectives of persons with disabilities in emergency and humanitarian crises. The activities of the Inter-Agency Support Group include the provision of substantive and organizational support to advance disability inclusion in the World Humanitarian Summit. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has strengthened its programmes by promoting accessibility and inclusive responses to refugees with disabilities, while the United Nations Mine Action Service has continued to provide assistance to survivors and victims of explosive devices.

28. The regional commissions have continued to provide technical support to Member States to assist them in their efforts to implement policies and programmes to advance the rights of persons with disabilities. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) has strengthened institutional capacities in Arab States, bringing together representatives from Governments, civil society and the United Nations system to discuss strategies to strengthen national mechanisms, including the development of monitoring indicators. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and ESCWA have published papers on disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction and, in collaboration with civil society and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), are developing an interactive e-learning tool for effective disability-inclusive disaster preparedness. ESCAP has also trained 16 Member States on the accessibility of built environments and services and launched an accessibility centre at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok.

29. Accessibility has also been a focus of ITU, which has continued to promote the development of policies favouring accessible information and communications technology through capacity-building and awareness-raising activities. The World Intellectual Property Organization has continued to support, through the Accessible Books Consortium, the implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled. UN-Habitat, in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, has developed technical guidance and tools for Member States to promote a human rights-based approach to accessible housing and inclusive urban spaces.

30. In the area of gender equality, the Inter-Agency Support Group on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has established a sub-working group on women and girls with disabilities. The working group, led by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), has organized a number of activities and consultations to address cross-sectionalities of gender and disability and to advance the situation of women and girls with disabilities and their representative organizations. UN-Women has also continued to provide technical assistance to Member States for the economic empowerment and leadership of women and girls with disabilities.

31. The United Nations Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has completed all joint United Nations agency projects in round one, reporting significant results. In addition to country-level projects, it is supporting regional initiatives, including the establishment of the African Disability Forum, to unify and amplify the voices of persons with disabilities in Africa, and the "Pacific Enable" project, to improve the lives of persons with disabilities in the Pacific islands.

32. The World Health Organization (WHO) has launched the Global Disability Action Plan 2014-2021 to improve health outcomes for all persons with disabilities. WHO continues to focus efforts on strengthening disability-disaggregated data, removing barriers to health services, improving access to support and assistance services, and community-based rehabilitation.

C. Civil society organizations

33. Significant progress has been made by civil society organizations, including organizations of persons with disabilities to be involved in decision-making processes at the national and international levels. For example, notable progress was made in ensuring the active participation of such persons in the processes leading to the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, held in New York in September 2015. Practical documents providing guidance on the engagement of persons with disabilities have been developed by civil society organizations. Training programmes promoting accessibility have been delivered worldwide by the International Disability Alliance and the International Disability and Development Consortium to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for persons with disabilities.

34. Progress has also been made in terms of expanding the scope of work to better respond to the rights and perspectives of persons with disabilities. Civil society organizations are increasingly engaging in disability issues and are strengthening the mainstreaming of disability. Meanwhile, organizations of persons with disabilities are increasingly engaging in the analysis of disability data, recognizing the urgent need to support evidence-based decision-making. For example, one organization, Sightsavers, has developed guidance notes to identify good practices and approaches to use in collecting and analysing disability-disaggregated data at the community level; and Atlas Alliance has continued to conduct training for disability inclusion in data collection. Disabled People's International is calling for a disability data revolution for effective research on the situation of persons with disabilities in development.

35. Organizations such as the World Federation of the Deaf have continued to increase the accessibility of information through sign language and multimedia formats. Other organizations, such as Royal Dutch Kentalis, have continued to advance the inclusive education of children with disabilities. The Zero Project reported on efforts made in a number of countries to improve access to transportation, built environments and education for persons with disabilities.

IV. Progress, challenges and opportunities in disability-inclusive development

36. Notable progress has been made in the integration of the rights, well-being and perspectives of persons with disabilities in national development policies and

programmes; however, significant barriers to such inclusion remain in a number of areas. The present section reviews the progress made and discusses some persistent challenges to mainstreaming disability, as well as some options to accelerate the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities to implement a truly inclusive 2030 Agenda.

A. Assessing progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and targets for persons with disabilities

37. The Sustainable Development Goals and targets are part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is built on the principle of leaving no one behind and including persons with disabilities. As discussed above, several targets of the Sustainable Development Goals explicitly address the needs of persons with disabilities and sustainable development indicators have been agreed upon to monitor progress for persons with disabilities with regard to selected targets. Now that this development framework has been established, the Agenda needs to be translated into implementation. To achieve this, it will be crucial to measure and assess progress made towards the realization of targets of the Sustainable Development Goals for persons with disabilities. However, such an endeavour has never been conducted at the global level for persons with disabilities. Without a precedent to serve as a model, strategies will have to be identified to effectively measure and assess progress towards Sustainable Development Goals and targets for persons with disabilities.

38. With this in mind, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and ESCWA have undertaken a number of activities to advance the operationalization of the 2030 Agenda. In the Expert Group Meeting on Disability and Development: Operationalizing the Post-2015 Development Agenda for Persons with Disabilities, held in Beirut in May 2015, experts provided recommendations on the monitoring and evaluation of progress made towards targets for persons with disabilities in the context of the new development agenda. At the commemoration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3 December 2015, a panel discussion was organized on operationalizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with regard to disability data, statistics and indicators for persons with disabilities.[8]

39. Operationalizing the 2030 Agenda from a disability perspective will require effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track progress and facilitate policymaking, including a list of indicators, established data production and an evidence-based analysis of policies and programmes. It will require a two-track approach: (a) mainstreaming disability in all processes related to the follow-up and review of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets; and (b) establishing follow-up and review processes focusing on issues concerning persons with disabilities. It is essential that data on disability are improved and collected regularly to monitor and assess progress and the situation of persons with disabilities in the context of the Goals. Proper impact evaluation studies will also be needed to assess which policies better promote disability inclusion and progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals for persons with disabilities.

[8] On the basis of the recommendations from experts at these two events, a technical note entitled "Operationalizing the 2030 agenda: ways forward to improve monitoring and evaluation of disability inclusion" was released in December 2015 (www.un.org/disabilities/documents/desa/operationalizing_2030_agenda.pdf).

40. Shortcomings in the availability of consistent and reliable data have been an ongoing challenge in the area of disability and development. Disability data remain scarce and are often of poor quality in many countries, particularly in developing countries. Internationally comparable data are currently insufficient to provide a global picture of the situation of persons with disabilities in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals. Therefore, it is currently not possible to determine the global baseline against which progress from 2015 onwards can be compared. Countries, with the support of the international community, should make efforts to establish this baseline as early as possible, by launching the necessary data production activities and using existing international recommendations and guidelines for collecting data on disability. The number of countries using the United Nations recommendations for collecting disability data in censuses has been increasing and thus more internationally comparable data are available today.[9] However, many countries are still using different methodologies.

41. At the international level, disability data are not currently being compiled in a systematic way. This makes it difficult to know what data exist and where the gaps are for monitoring progress towards the 2030 Agenda. The Statistics Division of the Secretariat has begun activities to undertake another round of collecting statistics for updating the international database on disability statistics. This will facilitate the identification of already existing data, as well as gaps, in terms of the data required for monitoring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. Identifying those gaps will also enable targeted interventions for national capacity-building so that countries will be better equipped to generate data for monitoring progress towards disability inclusion, with a view to reviewing and following up on the commitments of the 2030 Agenda.

42. Much has been discussed about the data revolution and how it can contribute to the monitoring and implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Disability inclusion can gain from a wider and innovative perspective on monitoring and from the role that these innovative technologies can play in implementing disability inclusion and therefore implementing development outcomes. Various sources of evidence should be explored to guide the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for persons with disabilities.

43. A few targets of the Sustainable Development Goals focus on accessibility, in particular, schools sensitive to persons with disabilities, accessible transport and accessible green and public spaces. Apart from data disaggregated by disability, monitoring and evaluation of accessibility will be needed to implement the 2030 Agenda. International Organization for Standardization (ISO) accessibility standards exist for buildings and for web content but have yet to be established for many key environments such as transportation, educational and health facilities. In addition, internationally comparable measures of accessibility for both physical and virtual environments have yet to be developed. The lack of standards and measures prevents internationally comparable monitoring of accessibility by countries and the review and follow-up of targets of the Sustainable Development Goals related to accessibility.

44. Some countries have produced their own accessibility guidelines, but accessibility assessments are still seldom conducted at the national level. In the context of the data revolution initiative, the exploration of unconventional sources of

[9] "Developing an indicator framework for the post-2015 development agenda", presentation made by the Statistics Division of the Secretariat at the eighth session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, June 2015.

evidence on accessibility may be useful. Internet and mobile applications crowdsourcing information on accessibility of places open to the public already exist. The data collected by these applications could be used to inform about accessibility and, as the mapping of accessibility places becomes more comprehensive, to produce measures for accessibility for neighbourhoods, cities, countries and the entire world. Regular use of such sources of evidence may benefit from partnerships between national authorities and the developers of such applications.

45. The effectiveness and utility of disability data and statistics rely on the existence of a political linkage. Significant support needs to be provided to government officials to ensure that they can interpret existing data on disability and input the resulting evidence into decision-making processes and programme development. In addition, impact evaluation studies can contribute to the analysis of evidence and assist policymakers in designing new policies and deciding to scale up, refine or discontinue existing policies. There are many well-established methodologies for evaluating the impact of policy, but their use in assessing disability policies is still limited. Countries and international agencies should regularly conduct impact evaluation studies on policies and programmes aimed at promoting disability inclusion.

46. Several reports are expected to assess the progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals for persons with disabilities: the Global Sustainable Development Report, the report of the Secretary-General on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and a United Nations flagship report on the status of disability in development, to be published in 2018 pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/142. In addition, several indicators are likely to provide a wealth of information on the situations of persons with disabilities vis-à-vis the Sustainable Development Goals in the coming years: the Sustainable Development Goal indicators, the indicators of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the indicators to be developed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to monitor the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities within the context of the Sustainable Development Goals. These initiatives may benefit from forms of coordination and collaboration such as strengthening existing mechanisms to coordinate the disability perspective in these processes and to review progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals for persons with disabilities.

B. Addressing inequality through accessibility

47. As reiterated in the high-level meeting, accessibility is a fundamental human right and a precondition to the realization of other basic human rights for persons with disabilities. This was reaffirmed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which specifically identifies accessibility and disability inclusion in urban design and human settlements. Forms of inclusion, including accessibility, are explicitly mentioned in the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 11, in relation to inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities.

48. More than half of all persons with disabilities worldwide live in towns and cities. It is estimated that by 2030 this number will increase to between 750 million

and 1 billion.[10] With such growth in urbanization, cities are at the epicentre of global sustainable development. If designed well, urban development offers significant opportunities for increased participation and inclusion for persons with disabilities. Accessibility to physical, built and virtual environments, services and facilities is essential to enable persons with disabilities to benefit effectively and equally from economic and social gains. Accessibility thus serves to enable persons with disabilities to participate in political, economic, social, cultural and civic spheres. Conversely, accessibility limitations represent devastating barriers to the participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of society and development. Accessibility in urban development therefore forms an integral part of any sustainable development agenda that aims to be inclusive and leave no one behind. In a practical sense, this means principles of universal design need to be adopted and applied by all agents and stakeholders in both the public and private sectors and that social inclusion, in all its forms, should be a central consideration of urban developers.

49. Voluntary ad hoc commitments are not sufficient to remove barriers to the built and virtual environments. Strong commitment, in concrete terms, including predictable resource allocation, to the implementation of "design-for-all" approaches, as well as systematic engagement and consultation with organizations of persons with disabilities, is required to ensure disability-inclusive urbanization.

50. Accessibility should not be viewed as a goal reserved for wealthier communities. Studies have indicated that accessible and disability-inclusive urban development can be realized everywhere at little cost to urban planning and infrastructure.[11] In view of Sustainable Development Goal 10, to reduce inequality within and among countries, technological and information transfers from one country to another, as well as within nations, could be better promoted and managed to enable breakthroughs in research and inclusion gains to reach those most excluded and marginalized. International cooperation, the provision of technical assistance and intellectual property concessions could be useful in this regard.

51. Moving forward, the design and planning of sustainable built environments will require a holistic and people-centred approach that informs, engages and involves persons with disabilities and their organizations in all aspects of urban development in a systematic way. The New Urban Agenda, which will be adopted at Habitat III in October 2016, has the potential to guide this transformation, by removing physical and virtual barriers to participation.

C. Inclusion though integrated approaches to policymaking

52. To effectively mainstream disability and ensure that no one is left behind in national development efforts, the formulation and application of all development policies and programmes at the national level would benefit from reviews from a disability perspective. It is essential that national laws and policies are non-discriminatory and inclusive in their scope, as well as in their application, and

[10] It is estimated that 15-20 per cent of urban dwellers are persons with disabilities (World Health Organization and World Bank, *World Report on Disability* (World Health Organization, Geneva, 2011); and United Nations Population Fund, "Urbanization", available from www.unfpa.org/urbanization (accessed on 27 July 2016)).

[11] World Health Organization and World Bank, World Report on Disability (World Health Organization, Geneva, 2011).

that they are responsive to the needs and perspectives of persons with disabilities. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as a development instrument, should be used as a guide in this regard. Effective mainstreaming of disability requires more than just consultation with persons with disabilities and their representative organizations. It requires their active participation.

53. While a great deal of traction has been gained in developing and providing targeted support for groups of persons with disabilities, including in international development cooperation activities, effective mainstreaming of disability in social policies and programmes remains a challenge in most countries. In instances where such mainstreaming has been attempted, persons with disabilities are sometimes lumped together with other marginalized groups or treated as an "add-on" group. Such efforts therefore fail to effectively take into consideration the diversity of perspectives of persons with disabilities and result in inadequate responses to their needs.

54. Similar issues emerge in relation to addressing intersectionalities among issues affecting persons with disabilities and other marginalized and/or disadvantaged groups. For example, challenges persist in terms of realizing gender perspectives in the context of work that focuses on the empowerment of persons with disabilities. The same can be said of efforts to mainstream disability perspectives in work to advance gender equality. Responding to these intersectionalities and the diversity of needs and perspectives of persons with disabilities requires new forms of collaboration, coordination and sharing of expertise beyond traditional spheres. Existing mechanisms to implement the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other international human rights instruments, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, need to be strengthened and aligned with mainstream development policies and programmes, including those that are designed or will be designed for the realization of the 2030 Agenda.

55. The 2030 Agenda calls for an integrated approach to disability and development. Addressing the development needs and interests of persons with disabilities will gain from recognizing the diversity of needs and perspectives of persons with disabilities are interdependent. Without access to education or skills training, the Sustainable Development Goals related to employment will be difficult to realize. Without employment and accessible services, the Sustainable Development Goals on poverty and inequality are difficult to fulfil. The realization of the Sustainable Development Goals for persons with disabilities is also, for the most part, dependent on the realization of development goals for other groups of persons. Since the rights, opportunities and outcomes for persons with disabilities and other groups are interdependent, disability-responsive measures should not be pursued in isolation or wholly in parallel to existing policies and mechanisms.

56. In practice, this means that substantive reforms to existing procedures and institutional structures are necessary to ensure that disability-responsive decision-making and programming take place in all relevant spheres. Gains would flow from the effective integration of the rights and perspectives of persons with disabilities in the planning, budgeting and implementation programmes of all line ministries and institutions, not just those traditionally tasked with addressing disability issues.

57. Efforts to establish and strengthen the roles of national disability institutions to support mainstreaming of disability are positive steps towards the development and

integration of disability-responsive government policies and programming. Significant regional support to strengthen such national mechanisms has also offered a number of key lessons to be learned in this regard. Judging from those experiences and the varying levels of success among national disability institutions, it is clear that the mere existence of coordination bodies to ensure systematic dialogue between line ministries and stakeholders is essential, but is not an end in itself. Effective mainstreaming of disability relies on direct collaborative partnerships between disability experts and sectoral or programme specialists and the ultimate responsibility and accountability for mainstreaming the rights and perspectives of persons with disabilities need to remain within the line ministries. Operationalization of the 2030 Agenda for persons with disabilities will require extensive collaboration and coordination of disability-inclusive measures and the integration of those measures into existing and new mainstream policies and programmes.

D. Strengthening development outcomes for persons with disabilities through intersectoral, multidimensional approaches

58. Development outcomes are compromised by situations of persistent inequality and the failure to uphold the rights of persons with disabilities. Recognizing this, the 2030 Agenda presents sustainable development and peace as intrinsically linked and mutually reinforcing. It therefore calls for a sharing of knowledge, capacities and resources from across the development, humanitarian and peace and security spheres. Inclusive development depends on the existence of peaceful societies and communities; and peace depends on inclusivity and sustainable development. The cross-sectionalities among disability human rights, other issues that guide humanitarian action, disaster risk reduction and responses, and development need to be further explored and pursued with a view to breaking down silos (i.e., obstacles to interaction) in order to strengthen the inclusion of persons with disabilities. Recognizing the need to move towards risk-informed development, humanitarian assistance and development can no longer be conceptualized as a transitional process or as separate spheres of work.

59. Persons with disabilities face heightened risks during emergency situations and humanitarian crises. In such situations, including protracted displacement, refugees and internationally displaced persons with disabilities face compound barriers to accessing basic services, including education, health care and employment. Humanitarian assistance alone is inadequately resourced and does not have the capacity to effectively address or sustainably respond to the developmental needs of persons with disabilities, particularly in the context of protracted crises. Inclusive development requires that persons with disabilities benefit from longer-term development investments during times of crises, particularly protracted crises, and during the transitional period leading to recovery. To date, however, development and humanitarian actors have largely failed to systematically collaborate in their responses to the humanitarian and developmental needs of persons with disabilities.

60. It has been recognized that disability inclusion in all stages of crises prevention, risk mitigation and responses is critical to the creation of resilient,

inclusive and equitable societies. Several studies[12] have shown that including the needs and voices of persons with disabilities at each of these stages can significantly reduce their vulnerability and increase the effectiveness of response and recovery efforts. However, despite increasing worldwide attention to the need for more inclusive approaches to emergency mitigation and responses, including a greater focus on disaster risk reduction as opposed to mere response mechanisms, most actors fail to adequately plan for — or include — persons with disabilities in their policies and programmes. This causes severe inequities in access to immediate responses, in addition to having an impact on longer-term recovery resources, placing persons with disabilities further behind on the path towards development. The integration of disability perspectives in all phases of emergency and humanitarian action directly affects broader inclusion and integration in society.

61. Development actors can bring experience and strategies to support responses to humanitarian needs through ongoing support for human development and capacity-building during times of protracted crises, particularly in situations calling for support for the integration of displaced persons in societies and communities, as well as in efforts to support recovery from crises. Relief assistance could be improved through responses that address both the immediate needs of communities and the longer-term development needs. Infrastructure development and related services that incorporate the principles of universal design are one example of important development investments for disability inclusion, in host communities and in reconstruction efforts. The challenge faced by the international community, including the United Nations system, is to be able to translate these concepts into coordinated and mutually reinforcing approaches on the ground while retaining flexibility to respond to changing demands. A coherent approach linking development actors with emergency and humanitarian assistance providers could be better pursued with a focus on supporting a continual path towards inclusive social and economic development for persons with disabilities.

62. A number of existing structures could be used to support the operationalization of these multidimensional links. Within the United Nations system alone, a number of inter-agency mechanisms and systems operating as part of the "One United Nations" initiative already exist to support the breaking down of silos between areas of focus and thematic fields of work. The Inter-Agency Support Group on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the United Nations Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities are two such technical and operational mechanisms that could take action to identify links and support better collaboration and coordination in the various areas of work. United Nations country teams also provide an entry point for strengthening grass-roots coherence at the operational level in the fields of development, human rights and peace and security. United Nations country teams that have already begun coordinating the mainstreaming of the rights, perspectives and well-being of persons with disabilities in their work are making progress, with a number of activities of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework already reflecting efforts at mainstreaming disability. However such progress and efforts are largely taking place on an ad hoc basis. In order to systematize mainstreaming and coordinated

[12] See, for example, United States, Department of Education, *Emergency Management Research and People with Disabilities: A Resource Guide* (Washington, D.C., 2008); and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, *World Disasters Report 2007: Focus on Discrimination* (2007).

approaches, the gap in the capacities of country-level agencies needs to be addressed. Effectively, this requires investment in capacity-building, coordination and systematic reporting of United Nations country teams on mainstreaming disability and other relevant efforts.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

63. The inclusion of the rights and perspectives of persons with disabilities has gained momentum at the global level, particularly through the adoption the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. New multi-stakeholder networks that go beyond traditional mandates and spheres of work are also emerging. Further, there has been a consistent call for stronger and more ambitious action by all stakeholders to meaningfully engage persons with disabilities in all decision-making and planning processes.

64. The present report has reviewed the recent developments in ongoing intergovernmental processes and assessed opportunities for building more inclusive societies. In this context, the role of the United Nations in taking an integrated approach to strengthen its three pillars of peace and security, humanitarian assistance, and development has been discussed.

65. While considerable progress has been made, mainstreaming of disability remains a global challenge. Further efforts are needed to strengthen the normative and operational links and to effectively integrate mainstreaming of disability in development policies and programmes. The present report has explored the role of accessibility and integrated institutional approaches to bridging some of the present gaps in inclusive development and removing the barriers.

66. Recognizing the scale and impact of protracted humanitarian crises on the economic and social outcomes for persons with disabilities, the international community should take all possible measures to systematically incorporate disability-specific goals in all spheres of work and to break down traditional silos in order to enhance cooperation and collaboration for inclusion.

67. There continue to be challenges to making the monitoring, review, follow-up and implementation of the 2030 Agenda disability-inclusive. There is an urgent need to address the consistent lack of monitoring and evaluation tools that would enable managers, government officials and others to translate broad statements on the inclusion of disability issues into concrete action.

68. A significant challenge for effectively monitoring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for persons with disabilities is the lack of high-quality data that can be used to make comparisons between countries over time in areas of critical importance to the inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities such as education, employment, health and participation in decision-making. Such data are required to provide viable baselines and measure progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals for persons with disabilities.

69. Studies on the impact of policies and programmes promoting disability inclusion are scarce. More evaluations, based on solid evidence, of the impact of policies and programmes promoting disability inclusion will be needed to guide the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for persons with disabilities.

70. The follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and other processes[13] are expected to reflect on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals for persons with disabilities. In order to promote collaboration and avoid duplication, it may be beneficial to consider building on existing mechanisms to ensure a platform that coordinates the different assessments of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals for persons with disabilities in these respective processes.

71. The General Assembly may wish to consider the following specific actions to promote the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of disability-inclusive Sustainable Development Goals:

(a) Encourage Member States and other stakeholders to take immediate action to strengthen laws, policies and programmes concerning national social and economic development and to take a responsive and integrated approach to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for and with persons with disabilities;

(b) Encourage Members States, the United Nations system and relevant stakeholders to strengthen coordination in the humanitarian, disaster and development spheres so as to strengthen resilience, better mitigate risks and support pathways towards recovery and development, including during protracted crises, for persons with disabilities;

(c) Encourage Member States, international development institutions and other stakeholders, including the private sector, to promote accessibility and to apply principles of universal design in all aspects of urban development, including the planning, design and construction of physical and virtual environments, public spaces, transportation and public services;

(d) Encourage Member States to address data gaps and prioritize the collection, reporting, use and analysis of disability data with a view to urgently establishing a baseline for monitoring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals for persons with disabilities. Significant increased investments in national statistical offices are needed, including:

(i) Increase capacity-building, as part of the data revolution;[14]

(ii) Substantially increase resources devoted to the production of a broad range of disability statistics, so as to make possible the monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals for persons with disabilities;

(e) Urge Member States, the United Nations system, academic institutions and other stakeholders to take measures to promote, as well as to build countries' capacity for, the conducting of studies to evaluate the impact of policies and programmes promoting disability inclusion in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and measures to build the capacity of policymakers to interpret and use evidence of impact evaluation studies.

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[13] Such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and several reports submitted to the high-level political forum on sustainable development and the General Assembly.

[14] Independent Expert Advisory Group on the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development, "A world that counts: mobilising the data revolution for sustainable development", November 2014.